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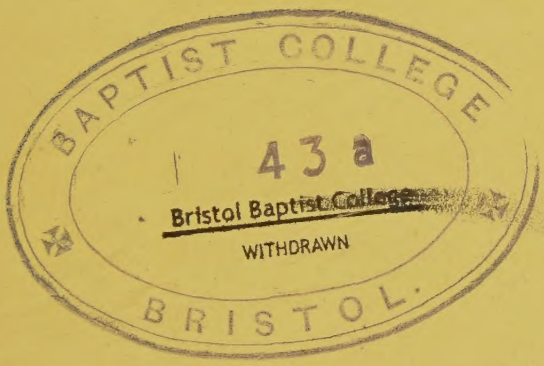
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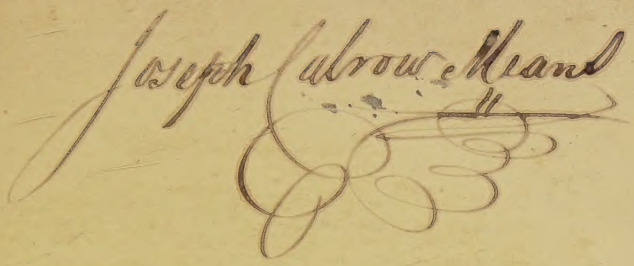

RECORDS

OF THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST,

GATHERED AT

FENSTANTON, WARBOYS, AND HEXHAM.

1644—1720.

EDITED FOR

The Hanserd Knollys Society,

BY

EDWARD BEAN UNDERHILL.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY, BY

HADDON, BROTHERS, AND CO., CASTLE STREET, FINSBURY.

M.DCCC.LIV.

LONDON :

HADDON, BROTHERS, AND CO., PRINTERS, CASTLE STREET, FINSBURY.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

ALTHOUGH the first few pages of the records of the Fenstanton church are wanting in the otherwise perfect volume from which they are taken, the commencement of the records of the Warboys church enables us to trace the formation of both churches to the energetic labours of Mr. Henry Denne.

From early youth intended by his parents for the ministry, Mr. Denne was educated at the University at Cambridge, and at the time of his ordination by the Bishop of St. Davids, in the year 1630, was strongly attached to the hierarchy and polity of the established church. He shortly became curate of the parish of Pyrton in Hertfordshire, where for ten years he fulfilled the duties of a parochial minister.[1]

At what period of his residence at Pyrton he became the subject of divine grace is not known; but in December, 1641, we find him preaching at Baldocke, Herts, a visitation sermon, which gave rise to no small excitement, and ultimately to his separation from the Anglican church. They were not novelties that he preached. He tells us that the sermon embodied those great truths of God's word, which, for ten years, he had delivered to his own parishioners. But

[1] Crosby, i. 222. Brooks' Lives of the Puritans, iii. 576.

they were novelties to the major part of his clerical auditory, scarcely less so than the fidelity with which he reproved their vices and false doctrine. "Thus do you," he boldly says, "in some case dissolve in the tavern, that which you confirmed in the pulpit, making a mock at the ordinances of God, and seducing those by your conversation for whom Christ died."[2]

Great must have been the decay of godliness in the church of England, when the doctrines of repentance and justification by faith were regarded as novelties. The rulers of the church had well nigh succeeded, in not only casting out the element of puritanism, but with it the life and root of piety. But while Mr. Denne sought to revive the saving knowledge of the gospel, at the same time he denounced the pluralities, the time-serving, the selfishness, and licentiousness of the clergy. In his visitation sermon he met the challenge often thrown out to him, that he dare not denounce in the presence of the clergy the vices against which he was wont to inveigh from the pulpit of Pyrton church. Indeed, he said, he accounted it his happiness to have that opportunity of confessing his faith, and of communicating his doctrine "unto so learned, judicious, and indifferent auditors." His text was John v. 35. From the example of John the Baptist he took occasion to discuss the nature of a gospel ministry, and the doctrines it should proclaim. He brought vividly before his hearers the zeal that animated the forerunner of our Lord, and the perils it had to overcome. "What," says he, "is become of apostolical zeal, of primitive courage, when we are so careful and so fearful, that we dare not inform truly, rebuke boldly, for fear of displeasing our patrons, for fear of losing, or hope of getting preferments? Look we into the church. What means the heaping up of eccle-

[2] Doctrine and Conversation of John Baptist, p. 71.

siastical preferments, pluralities, simonies, &c.? If all these proceed not from the root of covetousness, pardon my ignorance; I know not whence they come."[3]

Early in the year 1642, this manly and Christian protest against the errors of the times was published,[4] and somewhat later a small work on the nature of true living faith, presumption, and despair.[5] This latter work is in the form of a dialogue between a sick man and his minister. Mr. Denne's publications called forth a reply from the vicar of a neighbouring parish, notable only for its heaviness and aridity.[6]

The date of Mr. Denne's reception of baptist sentiments is not known; but it appears that he was baptized some time early in the year 1643, probably by Mr. Lamb, pastor of a church meeting in Bell Alley, Coleman Street, London, or one of its members, and with which he united in communion. The progress of public affairs greatly encouraged the attempts, which were now made, to spread views of divine truth long proscribed by the authorities in church and state. It was the era of the Long Parliament. The High Commission Court and the Star Chamber were destroyed, and the coercive power of the spiritual courts was taken away. The unwonted liberty of action and speech was seized with avidity by all parties.

The abilities of Mr. Denne were immediately brought into action,[7] The church of which he was a member sent him

[3] The Doctrine, &c., pp. 60, 63.

[4] The Doctrine and Conversation of John Baptist, delivered in a Sermon at a Visitation, &c, Dec. 9, 1641, contradicted by many of the auditors. By Henry Denne, an unworthy minister of Christ Jesus, &c. London, 1642, 12mo.

[5] A Conference between a Sick Man and a Minister, &c. By Henry Denne. London, 1642. 12mo.

[6] A Den of Thieves discovered, or Certaine Errours and False Doctrines delivered in a sermon, &c., by Henry Denne. And since printed by his own appointment. Contradicted justly by many of the auditors. And confuted by T. A. Rotherham, &c. London, 1643. 4to.

[7] "Mr. Disborough saith of him, he is the ablest man in England for prayer, expounding, and preaching." Edwards' Gangræna, i. 23.

forth into Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire to propagate the long oppressed truth of the word of God. His labours were effectual, many churches sprang into existence, and amongst them the churches at Warboys and Fenstanton. "He did much mischief in those parts," says the virulent presbyterian writer, Edwards. But while presbyterians and independents were entirely free to preach everywhere, not so the baptists. Towards the close of 1644, the Cambridge committee for providing preaching ministers and removing scandalous ones, arrested and imprisoned Mr. Denne. By the influence of Mr. Desborough or Disbrowe, a brother-in-law of Cromwell, the matter was brought before a committee of Parliament. Mr. Denne was removed from Cambridge, and for a short time suffered imprisonment in the Peter-house, Aldersgate Street, London.

While confined in the Peter-house, he there met the notorious Dr. Daniel Featley, a prisoner for his attachment to the cause of royalty. With him he held personal controversy on the subject of baptism, and on the appearance of Featley's book, entitled "The Dippers Dipt,"[8] he immediately commenced a brief reply. The chief purpose of Featley's publication was to give an account of a disputation held in Southwark, on the 17th of October, 1642, between himself and several baptists, of whom Mr. Kiffin[9] was the the leader. Besides baptism, the subject of oaths is discussed; also the power of the civil magistrate in the things of God. The most frightful stories of the fanaticism of past ages are raked together and freely told, in order to render the sect obnoxious, and to provoke the authorities to crush the rising heresy. It is a grief to him that the bright days of Elizabeth and James were gone. "Of late," says he, "since the unhappy distractions which our sins have brought upon

[8] "The Dippers Dipt, or the Anabaptists Duck'd and Plung'd over head and eares," &c. London, 1645, 4to., 3rd edit.

[9] Spelled *Cufin* by Featley, p. 3, &c.

us, the temporal sword being other ways employed, and the spiritual locked up fast in the scabbard, this sect, among others, hath so far presumed on the patience of the state, that it hath held weekly conventicles, re-baptized hundreds of men and women together, in the twilight, in rivulets, and some arms of the Thames, and elsewhere, dipping them over head and ears."[1] Besides which they added to their offences that of printing numerous works in defence of the doctrines they maintained, and against the "bloody tenet of persecution."

While in prison at Cambridge, Mr. Denne had commenced a reply to a sermon by Mr. Stephen Marshall, on infant baptism.[2] He now united Dr. Featley's production with it, and in February, 1645, issued, in two small treatises, his remarks on both. One treatise was entitled, "The Foundation of Children's baptism discovered," and the other, "The Man of Sin discovered." In one of these treatises he promises to write more at length his views on the extent of the death of Christ, which he regarded as applicable to the necessities of all mankind. This he briefly accomplished in the month of April, in a small piece, entitled, "Grace, Mercy, and Peace."[3] The book is divided into two parts. In the first, he treats of God's reconciliation to man; in the second, of man's reconciliation to God. In pursuing the first topic, he desires it to be granted, "that when we were reconciled to God, he was without all doubt reconciled to us; for our reconciliation to him is not the cause of his reconciliation to us; but, contrary, his reconciliation to us is the cause of our reconciliation to him." "Christ given is the effect of God's love, not the cause; the love of God goes before the gift of his Son, as the cause before the effect." "God doth not love us because he

[1] Preface to the Reader.

[2] A Sermon of the Baptizing of Infants; preached in the Abbey Church at Westminster, by Stephen Marshall, B.D. London, 1645, 4to.

[3] It purports to be printed for the benefit of the city of Rochester. See p. 373.

foresaw we would repent and believe; but therefore causeth us to repent and believe, in his time, because he loveth us." In the second part, he affirms that while "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, without any previous conditions in us, or performed by us," yet "man's actual reconciliation to God requireth previous conditions and qualifications to be wrought in man by the Spirit of God, before man can be actually reconciled to God, or God's reconciliation manifested unto him." Such were the views of this worthy servant of Christ, and on which the general baptist churches of the midland counties were primarily founded.

On his release from the Peter-house, Mr. Denne became the minister of the parish of Eltisley, in Cambridgeshire, though his residence would appear to have been at Caxton. Eltisley living was in the gift of the Disbrowe family, to whom the manor belonged. The bitter tory Noble, in his History of the Protectoral House of Cromwell, gives some curious particulars of the James Disbrowe whose name appears in the Fenstanton records as an elder of the church, and of his connection with Mr. Denne. James Disbrowe, lord of the manor of Eltisley, and brother of Major-General Disbrowe, was, he tells us, "remarkably disaffected to the monarchical as well as episcopal government, and he rendered Eltisley, the place of his residence, memorable for being an asylum for the most extravagant fanaticism, having placed over that parish Mr. H. Denne, an ambitious, time-serving clergyman, whom he had (through the interest of the all-powerful Mr. Cromwell) released from prison. This man, to please his patron and the lowest of the rabble, fell in with all the ridiculous folly that so much disgraced the era of liberty. Psalm-singing was as heinous a sin at Eltisley as bending the knee to Baal, and it was then as much noted for the devout exercises practised there, as any other canting place in the kingdom. So great a patron of the godly was sure of gaining the friendship of his party. He was appointed a seques-

trator, an office he was peculiarly well qualified for; and Oliver nominated him one of the assessors of his monthly payments."[4]

Mr. Denne's labours were not confined to Cambridgeshire. In November, of the year 1645, we find him in London, in conference with a minister of the city; also preaching to Mr. Lamb's people, where, says Edwards, "his usual theme of discourse is Christ's dying for all, for Judas as well as for Peter. . . . . Men were only damned for not believing in Christ, and for nothing else."[5] In December Mr. Denne was at Rochester, in Kent, in which county he appears to have been very successful as a minister of Christ.

The year 1646 was employed in a similar way, "going up and down the countries," says Edwards,[6] "spreading his corrupt opinions, and dipping." In June he was arrested at Spalding in Lincolnshire, and brought before two justices of the peace. He was charged with baptizing in the river four persons. In his own examination, Mr. Denne states that he resided at Caxton, "but doth exercise at Eltisley within a mile of his own house;" that he had been ordained sixteen years before by the bishop of St. David's; and that he had exercised his gifts about four times in various places and houses in Spalding. He would not, however, confess that he had administered the ordinance of baptism. *This* it was for his adversaries to prove. We are not informed of the result of his arrest, except that he was confined "to the provost marshal for that day, being the Lord's day, that he should not make a meeting nor stir in the town that day by people resorting to him."[7] It is probable that the authorities of Spalding were of the king's party, and feared as much the political sentiments of Mr. Denne as his religious instructions.

[4] Memorials, &c., by Mark Noble, ii. 276. 2nd edit.

[5] Gangræna, i. 23.

[6] Gangræna, iii. 86.

[7] Gangræna, iii. 87.

Nearly three years must pass away before we discover anything further of Mr. Denne. We then find him under the singular circumstances detailed in the paragraph following, taken from a newspaper of the time :[8]—

"Saturday, May 19.—This day also came intelligence of the surprisal of the revolted troops about Burford in Oxfordshire, they being twelve troops were all taken; very few escaped, some of the chief of which were immediately condemned to suffer death, viz.: Cornet Tompson and Cornet Den, or as we call him, Parson Den, and two corporals, Church and Perkins; these being found guilty upon the articles of mutiny, are thereupon adjudged to die. Cornet Den, being a man of parts, and one who had been esteemed for piety and honesty, received his sentence with great manliness and fortitude of spirit, yet with so much relenting and acknowledgment of the just hand of God, the justice of the sentence, and his submission thereunto, that he seemed to rejoice with willingness to suffer under so righteous a sentence, and he professed openly, that although his heart could not accuse him of an evil meaning, yet was he convinced of the evil of the action and dangerous consequences of it; that if they had but continued three or four days longer, the land had been plunged in misery and ruin, and that the invasion of the Scots, and the insurrections in Wales and other parts of the nation, last year was not so hazardous as this.

"The four condemned persons were one after another brought to the place of execution, in the sight of the rest of the soldiers. Cornet Tompson, brother to him called Captain Tompson, a declared rebel by the parliament, was the first that suffered. He said not much at his death, the man in outward appearance having little of God in him; only he

[8] A Modest Narrative of Intelligence fitted for the Republique of England and Ireland. Numb. 8. From Saturday, May 19, to Saturday, May 26, 1649.

confessed the judgment was righteous, and that God was offended with his disobedience, whereof he was guilty. The two corporals (Church and Perkins) died, saying very little or nothing before their death. Cornet Den being called out, came with much composure of spirit, expecting to die, but the general having commanded the Lieutenant-general Cromwell to let him know at the place of execution that his excellency had extended mercy to him, he soberly and suddenly replied: 'I am not worthy of such a mercy; I am more ashamed to live than afraid to die,'—weeping bitterly."

It is thus clear that Mr. Denne, like many more, had entered the army,[9] and taken part in the war which overthrew the king, ended in his death, and in the creation of a republic. The immediate cause of the outbreak was the appointment of twelve regiments for service in Ireland, under Lieutenant-general Cromwell. Disaffection, however, was very prevalent. The officers were, for the most part, content to go; but not their men. The king indeed was dethroned; the war was at an end; but in their judgment the objects of the war were not attained. Liberty and a free commonwealth seemed to be as far off as ever. Parliament usurped all the functions of the state, and ruled with a despotic hand.

The disaffection first broke out into open mutiny in a troop of Whalley's regiment, in quarters in London. Of the men arrested, one only was shot. The rest were pardoned. Many thousands expressed their sympathy with the views of the mutineers by following the dead trooper to his grave.

[9] See Baxter's account of his joining the army, in his life by Orme, pp. 43—65. Sprigge says of the army: "They were better Christians than soldiers; wiser in faith than in fighting. ... Many of the officers, with their men, were much engaged in prayer and reading the scriptures. Men conquer better as they are saints than soldiers; and in the countries where they came, they left something of God as well as Cæsar behind them; something of piety as well as pay." Anglia Rediviva, p. 323. They got the name of *Military Levites* from the Cavaliers.

Lilburne and five others were soon after arrested and committed close prisoners to the Tower, on the charge of exciting the army to sedition. Shortly the flame burst out in the ranks of the army itself, in Oxfordshire, in Gloucestershire, and at the head quarters at Salisbury. A Cornet Thompson, at the head of a thousand men, broke up from Salisbury and marched northwards, Fairfax and Cromwell hastening to overtake them with such troops as they could raise and might be depended on. "The mutineers arrive at Wantage; make for Oxfordshire by Newbury; find the bridge already seized; cross higher up by swimming; get to Burford, very weary, and 'turn out their horses to grass;' Fairfax and Cromwell still following in hot speed, 'a march of near fifty miles' that Monday. . . . . The lieutenant-general having rested at a safe distance since dark, bursts into Burford as the clocks are striking midnight. He has beset some hundreds of the mutineers, 'who could only fire some shots out of the windows;'—has dissipated the mutiny, trodden down the levelling principle out of English affairs once more."[1]

Mr. Denne has himself exposed the motives of the mutineers.[2] The first cause of mutiny was their being designed for Ireland. Two years before the parliament had attempted, first to disband, and then, failing in that, to divide the army, by ordering part of it to Ireland. This led to the famous engagement of Triploe Heath, on the 8th June, 1647, by which the army consented to disband, when required by the parliament; but on the condition that their grievances should be redressed, arrears of pay fully paid up, and an act of

[1] Carlyle's Cromwell, i. 438. The date of this event was May 14th, 1649.

[2] The Leveller's Designe discovered; or the Anatomie of the late unhappie Mutinie: Presented unto the soul-diery of the army under the command of his Excellency the Lord Fairfax; for prevention of the like in others. Written by Henry Denne, an actor in this Tragedy. London, 1649, 4to.

indemnity passed, both for persons and things done during the war, on such security as should be agreed upon by a council of the army, formed of officers, and two soldiers from each regiment. Without this security they would neither disband, nor suffer themselves to be divided.[3] "We did believe," says Mr. Denne, "that there stood between us and Ireland, an engagement made by the army at that famous rendezvous at Triploe Heath. It was thought essentially conducing to the satisfaction of the army, to the reconciliation of differences, to the procuring of national freedom, and to the relief of Ireland, to require such a council to be set up again in the army. In this we were very bold (I do not say wise) propounding to his Excellency this condition to be performed, before we could submit to his Excellency's order. This performed, we were content to refer ourselves to the censure of this council. That which gave us boldness herein, and that which beguiled us, was this: that we did not conceive how the engagement could possibly admit of a dispensation."[4]

This was not, however, the sole ground of complaint; others existed. Much discontent was occasioned by the aspersions cast on several meritorious officers of the army. The parliament also had become exceedingly obnoxious to the army, by its evident design to secure to itself all power in church and state. It was openly said in the army: "One tyrant is pulled down, and a second set up in his room." The hoped-for advantages of the war were slow of realization. The movement of parliament towards "the taking away of oppression, and easing the grievances of the people," did not keep pace with the ardent expectations of the men who had hazarded their lives to obtain relief. Persons of corrupt interests occupied the places of better men.

[3] Rapin, ii. 530.

[4] Leveller's Designe, pp. 3, 4.

The arrangements made for carrying on the government were regarded as unconstitutional and tyrannical. Some[5] desired the self-denying ordinance to be observed; the command of the army to be frequently changed; the rigour of martial law to be mitigated; the Council of State to be dissolved; and the press to be free from censorship.

It was, perhaps, inevitable that the close of the war and the execution of the king, should result in these adverse opinions. What would grow out of the victory over royal tyranny none could tell. Every man had his theory of government; and every man his cause of complaint with the parties that had succeeded to the supreme power. The army opposed and finally suppressed the parliament. In its turn it was rent by internal dissensions, and was at last subdued by the genius of its greatest leader and general, Cromwell. The Burford mutiny, if it had succeeded, would have been fatal to Cromwell's elevation to the supreme power, which by this time he probably saw was at hand, and with his usual rapidity and sagacity he hastened to trample out its first scintillations.

The same influence which secured the release of Mr. Denne on a former occasion, was doubtless brought to bear again. He was pardoned. The death of two or three of his companions was sufficient to bring about the submission of the rest, and leniency might well be shown to one so highly esteemed as was Mr. Denne, by members of Cromwell's own family. On Mr. Denne's conduct in this affair we shall offer no opinion. His own judgment of himself will suffice. While awaiting death, as he thought, his meditations led him to see, he says, that if not prevented, "the mutiny would have proved more dangerous and destructive than the first war raised by the

[5] Petition presented by Lieut.-Col. Lilburne. Walker's Hist. of Indep. ii. 133.

king, with his cavalry, or the second revived by the Welsh, the Kentish, the invading Scots, and others." It would have divided a victorious and united army, have cut the sinews of the nation's strength, and delivered it a second time into the hands of its enemies. The engagement of Triploe Heath the army had itself repealed, and the Parliament, purged as it had been, was doing its best to restore things to order. "Justly," he adds, "did the Lord disown us, to teach all men that he is a God of order, and not of confusion; to teach us that he needeth not our disobedience to superiors, or any evil action to consummate this determination. These things have I declared for this end, that I may manifest unto my fellow soldiers, that I am ashamed of the late proceedings, and do conceive great indignation against myself, for being accessory to such rash attempts; that I may give warning unto others, that they may beware and fear to do any such thing. Oh! how necessary it is at all times to draw near unto God for wisdom and understanding, to guide us and direct us in all our ways."[6]

With the exception mentioned in the note below, nothing further is known of Mr. Denne's proceedings till the year 1653, when, in the month of May, we find him appointed with John Gilman and James Disbrowe to visit some recreant members of the church at Fenstanton.[7] It is probable that he disapproved of the new form of government ushered in by Cromwell's abrupt dismissal of the Rump, and the elevation of that successful general to the supreme authority. It was immediately followed by the dismissal of the baptists from all public employments, and the purging the army of their

[6] Leveller's Design, &c., p. 8. Whitelocke reports under date of Sept. 27th, that Mr. Denne raised a tumult at Stourbridge against the Commissioners of Excise. The cause he does not mention. Memorials, p. 412. Many similar tumults on account of the Excise occurred in other places, pp. 428, 430.

[7] See p. 45.

presence. As Cromwell rose he forgot those republican principles for which he had fought, and for which he had found among baptists his most strenuous supporters. Their presence in the army was both a reproach and a danger to be shunned.[8]

Mr. Denne now actively gave himself to the promotion of the cause of God, and the spread of divine truth. In the month of October, 1653, he laid before the Fenstanton church a proposition to traverse the neighbouring districts to preach the gospel, reminding them of our Lord's command to communicate to all the riches of his grace.[9] The church elected him one of their evangelists, and sent him forth to this work; the results will be found recorded in a subsequent page. It was also at Mr. Denne's suggestion that plans were adopted carefully to study those questions on which differences of opinion existed among the churches of Christ.[1] During the year 1654, Mr. Denne extended his evangelical labours to the county of Kent, revisiting the scenes of his ministry ten years before. It led to an earnest request on the part of the church at Canterbury, that Mr. Denne should be permitted to settle in that city. Early in 1655 he proceeded thither, with the cordial concurrence of the church at Fenstanton, being supplied by them with money, horses, and all necessary conveniences for the journey. On his arrival at Canterbury, early in February, he found a hearty welcome, and a house prepared for his reception.[2]

From this time Mr. Denne's movements are only known to us by the publications which issued from his pen. In December, 1658, he published an account of a discussion[3]

[8] See Crosby, ii. 4.
[9] See p. 71.
[1] See p. 83.
[2] See pp. 102—134.
[3] A Contention for truth: in two several Disputations before thousands of people, &c. London: 1658, 4to.

which had taken place on the 19th and 26th of the previous month, between himself and Dr. Gunning, under the Restoration bishop of Chichester and then of Ely.[4] It originated in the anxious entreaties of a lady whom God had led to repentance, but whose mind was much disturbed on the question, Whether infant baptism were of God or not? She desired that a friendly conference should be held in her presence. It was held in St. Clement Dane's church in the Strand, and excited the interest of thousands of people who flocked to hear it. On the first day Mr. Denne was respondent to the arguments for the lawfulness of infant baptism brought forward by Dr. Gunning. On the second day the combatants reversed their position, and Dr. Gunning became the respondent to the proofs presented by Mr. Denne that infant baptism was unlawful. It may be presumed that the arguments of Mr. Denne were not easily answered, since Dr. Gunning availed himself of a tumultuous interruption in the church to decline further controversy. It seems that the auditory supposed that Dr. Gunning had asserted, that it was no punishment to be shut out of heaven; an assertion, indeed, not directly made, but certainly a fair inference from his argument. It happened thus:—

Said *Dr. Gunning*—"Infants unbaptized (where there is no desire of their baptism in their parents or friends) shall be shut out of heaven."

Denne—"If unbaptized infants be shut out of heaven, then God punisheth some creatures for that which they can-

[4] Dr. Gunning was a leading disputant in the celebrated Savoy conference, and a forward persecutor of baptists and quakers under the Conventicle act, Neal, iii. 92, 168. Burnet says of him: "He was a man of great reading, and noted for a special subtlety of arguing: all the arts of sophistry were made use of by him on all occasions, in as confident a manner as if they had been sound reasoning. It was a favourite project of his to reconcile the church of England with popery in some points." Own Time, i. 181.

not help. But God punisheth no creature for that which they cannot help. Therefore unbaptized infants are not shut out of heaven."

Gunning—"I deny the consequence."

Denne—"Then shutting out of heaven is no punishment."

On the mind of the lady the conference was satisfactory. She was baptized by Mr. Denne on the 1st of December. The volume further contains some remarks on the supposed danger to life resulting from immersion, so strenuously urged by Mr. Baxter.

Mr. Denne next appears as the defender of Quakers, and of the celebrated "Tinker" of Bedford, against the "frivolous" charges of an old Cambridge friend of his, a Mr. Thomas Smith, the Reader in Rhetoric.[5] It seems that Mr. Smith fancied the quakers were papists, because they would not take the oath of abjuration. As for Bunyan, "You seem," says Mr. Denne, "to be angry with the Tinker because he strives to mend souls as well as kettles and pans. The main drift of your letter is to prove that none may preach except they be sent." In Denne's judgment, it was enough that the church of Bedford had called the "Tinker" forth to preach the gospel. He needed no better commission than that.

It is worthy of note, that Mr. Denne pleads in this pamphlet for a perfect toleration of papists, in respect of their religious belief. He regards their existence in a country as by no means incompatible with good government. It is not found to be so in the Netherlands. And why should their conscience be tortured for holding opinions which cannot at all affect their relations with the state—as transubstantiation,

[5] The Quaker no Papist, in answer to the Quaker Disarm'd. Or a Brief Reply and Censure of Mr. Thomas Smith's frivolous Relation of a Dispute held betwixt himself and certain quakers at Cambridge. By Henry Denne. London, 1659, 4to.

purgatory, merits, &c. "Let there be," he says, "an oath of abjuration framed, wherein papists shall be required only to abjure that doctrine imputed to them, viz., 'That faith is not to be kept with heretics,' or the like. And then, if any refuse such an oath, let them be dealt with as men not fit to live in a commonwealth; let them be banished."[6] In this view he anticipates the judgment of the celebrated Locke.

Shortly after the restoration of Charles II. to the throne of his ancestors, the insurrection of Venner gave rise to the apprehension and imprisonment of many baptists and others, who were supposed to sympathize with the principles of the Fifth Monarchy men. The false accusations were promptly met by apologies and remonstrances, On the very day of the royal proclamation, forbidding the assembling for worship of "anabaptists, quakers, and other sectaries," the London baptists presented to the king "An Humble Apology," with their names and those of other leading baptists appended to it, protesting against their supposed participation in Venner's rebellion.[8]

The royal ear was closed. This and other apologies were in vain. The meeting-houses were invaded by a rude and savage soldiery, and the prisons were soon filled to repletion with the victims of intolerance and arbitrary power. The indemnity granted at the coronation was of little service to some, from the necessity imposed upon them of taking the oath of allegiance. In common with the quakers, a few baptists deemed it sinful to take an oath, and their release from imprisonment was rendered still more hopeless by the bill brought into the House of Commons in May, 1661, for

[6] Mr. Denne also discredits the existence of disguised papists among the various sects. See the Hexham Records, p. 292 of this volume.

[7] Locke's First Letter on Toleration, p. 59, 4to. edit.

[8] Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, p. 315. Mr. Denne's name occurs in the list of subscribers

the suppression of baptists and quakers, having especial reference to their refusal to swear.[9]

In this emergency Mr. Denne again stepped forward, and addressed his brethren in prison.[1] He endeavoured to establish for their relief the principle, that to take an oath was a lawful act, and was sustained both by antiquity and the word of God. Probably some were convinced of their liberty. Others, however, refused it. One at least attempted to reply to the arguments of Mr. Denne.[2] In this controversy, for it became such, the eminent John Tombes and Mr. Jeremiah Ives took part, publishing the same views as those put forth by Mr. Denne.

Here our knowledge of Mr. Denne's biography ceases. By Crosby he is reported to have fallen asleep in the year 1661. An epitaph, said to have been written by a friend, a clergyman, only remains, commemorative of his virtues.

> "To tell his wisdom, learning, goodness, unto men,
> I need to say no more; but here lies Henry Denne.[3]

His work still remains, if not in the flourishing existence of the two churches whose early records are preserved in this volume, yet in the numerous general baptist churches of the midland counties, many of which trace their formation to his unwearied and godly labours.

From the time of its formation, till about the year 1676, or 1677, the Fenstanton church enjoyed the services of Mr. John Denne, as elder. He was the eldest son of Mr. Henry Denne, and resided at Caxton, at which place meetings of the church were often held. The first volume of the records is entirely

[9] Letters of Early Friends, p. 99.

[1] An Epistle recommended to all the Prisons in this city and nation To such as chuse restraint rather than the violation of their Consciences. By Henry Den. London, 1660, 4to.

[2] A Fanatic's Testimony against Swearing, &c. By Henry Adis, a baptized believer, &c. London, 1661, 4to.

[3] Crosby, i. 297—307, iii. 2.

in his handwriting, and consists of 384 quarto pages, neatly and well written. As intimated at its close, a second volume was begun, fragments only of which remain bound up in the volume containing the Warboys church records. From these fragments we learn that Mr. Henry Denne had a second son, by name Jonathan, a member of the church with his wife Sarah. Six children are in different places registered as born unto him. Mention is also made of a third son, David; and of a daughter, Rebecca; both of whom died before their parents. Of Mr. John Denne, six children are registered as born between 1654 and July 16th, 1672, the date of the birth of his youngest child. Two small pieces[4] were written by Mr. John Denne, both in opposition to the views of Mr. John Bunyan, as expressed in his confession of faith, and the practice of open communion.[5] It seems probable that he died in the year 1676, or 1679, and was then resident at St. Ives. In the expressive language of the records he "died in the faith."

Mr. William Dunn was one of the earliest converts at Warboys and was chosen elder of the church. For reasons given in the records he was for a time separated from their communion, but was afterwards restored. The manuscript volume containing the records, of the Warboys church, commences with his narrative of its formation, and its history for a few years. After his separation from the church, the story was re-commenced and re-written by another unknown writer, and is now found bound up with that of Mr. Dunn.

In the following pages these two narratives are united into one.

The two churches at Fenstanton and Warboys remained

[4] Truth outweighing Error, an Answer to Bunyan's Confession of Faith, 1673. Hypocrisie Detected, or Peaceable and True Principles, &c., London, 1674, 4to.

[5] See Bunyan's Works, Offor's edit. vol. ii. pp. 591, 648.

distinct till the year 1714, when the following entry occurs: "Nov. 5, 1714.—We, the church of Christ of baptized believers of Stanton and Warboys, did hold a church meeting at Warboys; and then and there did unanimously agree to hold together as one church as formerly,[6] and by the advice of Thomas White, messenger, have thought fit to subscribe our names for ourselves, and in the behalf of the whole.

THOMAS WHITE, Messenger.
JONATHAN DENNE, JOHN CROPPER.
SIMON MARTIN, and ROBERT KNIGHTLEY, } Deacons."

Eighteen names in all.

In another part of the manuscript is the following entry:—"From the 5th of the ninth month, in the year of our Lord 1714, a list taken of the names of all the members belonging to the congregation at Fenstanton and Warboys, owning the universal love of God in Christ to all mankind, &c., falsely called Anabaptists." The names of eighty-nine persons occur in this list, of whom sixty-three appear to have constituted the original membership of the united churches. A further list is subsequently given under date of November, 1725, when the united churches seem to have been diminished to fifty-two members. Mr. John Cropper was at that time elder, being chosen on the 7th April, 1720. In reference to his ordination is the following entry, in Mr. Cropper's handwriting:—

"On Tuesday, the 14th day of June, 1720, we held a day of fasting and prayer as directed by holy scripture, for the ordination of church officers; at which time was our brother,

[6] There is an entry in another place, dated Oct. 8, 1712, recording a church meeting of several brethren at Stanton from Warboys, to consult of and about such things as may be for the honour of God and the good of his people. A Mr. Thomas Clark was then chosen elder.

John Cropper, ordained elder, and our brother King was ordained a deacon, by the hands of our brother James Richardson, messenger, which was also done by the joint consent of all the brethren, both men and women (except Lewis Audley and his wife, who did not appear at that day's solemnity). It was a day of great comfort and satisfaction to all that were there."

In the year 1753, on Mr. Cropper's decease, Mr. Henry Biggs became the minister of the congregation. He died May 25, 1773, at the age of forty-four; and was succeeded by Mr. George Birley, at Lady-day, 1778. A somewhat lengthened account is given of his ordination, after which the entries are very few. Mr. Birley died June the 24th, 1824, leaving for the use of the general baptist cause in St. Ives, a small property, consisting of two shares in the Potton-road tolls; also £50 to the Wisbeach academy, and £10 to the poor of the church.

The last entry but one in the book, is the following:— "September 3rd, 1824, a unanimous invitation is given by the church to Mr. Wright (then serving as a supply) to continue his services as such, until the close of the year."

The church has now (1854) become nearly extinct, or is merged into other baptist churches which have arisen in its vicinity. The chapel at St. Ives is in the hands of the primitive methodists, and a few persons still continue to meet at Fenstanton. But these records remain to testify the faith of these early confessors of the truth, and their anxious and strict adherence to their conceptions of the laws and institutions of Christ Jesus.

For the use of the original manuscripts we are indebted to Mr. Thomas Rose of St. Ives, one of the few remaining members of the church.

Beyond the particulars to be found in the records themselves, we have no information respecting Mr. Tillam, and

the church at Hexham, which was formed by his labours. Mr. Douglas, of Hamsterley, has with great diligence collected all that is known of the history of the Northern churches,[7] and to his very laborious volume, we must refer the reader for information respecting them. Mr. Tillam was an author, and wrote a treatise on the Sabbath, and another on the Millennium, in which he appears to have believed. He also published the confession of the false Jew, with an account of his baptism, and also wrote a small tract in vindication of his own proceedings.

In his publication on the Sabbath, Mr. Tillam advocates the opinion that the seventh day was the day commanded to be kept holy for ever by God, and remains obligatory on all Christians since the Jewish economy has passed away. In maintenance of this view he took part with Dr. Chamberlain and Mr. Coppinger in a public discussion before hundreds of people, on the 6th January, 1659, and three other days. Their opponent was Mr. Jeremiah Ives. In his publication, "Saturday no Sabbath," Mr. Ives complains that Mr. Tillam decried syllogisms, and refused to answer them; while he freely indulged in rhetorical flourishes, and terms of art taken from the liberal sciences, to garnish his book. Certainly if Mr. Ives' account of the discussion is to be regarded as a faithful report of it, Mr. Tillam was far from showing himself an able or acute logician. At the third discussion, on the 2nd February, Mr. Henry Denne and Mr. John Gosnold were present, and would appear to have sustained the arguments urged by Mr. Ives.[8] The place of meeting was at Stone Chapel, by St. Paul's, London.

[7] History of the Baptist Churches in the North of England, from 1648 to 1845. By David Douglas, Hamsterley. London, 1846, 12mo.

[8] For these particulars I am indebted to the publication of Mr. Ives, entitled "Saturday no Sabbath; or the Seventh Day Sabbath proved to be of no force to the believing Gentiles in the time of the Gospel, &c." London, 12mo., 1659. Mr. Tillam's work I have failed to find.

Some additional notices of Mr. Gower are found in Surtees's History of Durham, from which it would appear that he continued to minister at Newcastle till 1669. An extract from the accounts of the churchwardens of Gateshead, exhibits him as a prisoner of the Lord. They note: "1669. Spent at Durham, being caused to witness against Mr. Goore for preaching at Rich. Stockton's on Sunday, July 11th, 4s." He must have remained some time imprisoned at Durham, since on the 26th June, 1672, Thos. More, the quaker, obtained the insertion of his name in the pardon granted by the king, on the petition of Whitehead and others. The prisoners in Durham were not however discharged at that time, nor in the January following.[9]

For a copy of the records and letters of Hexham church, and other information, we have to express our obligations to Mr. H. A. Wilkinson, of Gateshead.

[9] See Hanserd Knollys Society's edition of Pilgrim's Progress. Introd., pp. 163, 164.

THE RECORDS

OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST

AT

CAXTON PASTURES AND FENSTANTON.

ANNO DOMINI, 1651.

. . . . . to the will of God, that all those that will not be reconciled according to the Scriptures, but remain rotten, bringing forth no fruit, should be cut off from the body of Christ, (Matt. vii. 19,) that we that remain alive may bring forth more fruit, to the glory, honour, and praise of his most great and glorious name, who hath called us out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death, into the marvellous light of his Son Jesus; to whom, with the Father, be all honour, praise, and thanksgiving, both now and for evermore.

For the accomplishing of these things in order, on the 19th day of the ninth month, we did desire Thomas Bagley and his wife, and John Rich and his wife, of Yelling, and William Burges of Toseland, to give us a meeting at Caxton Pastures,[1] on the 23rd day of the ninth month, to declare the reasons of their long absenting themselves from the congregation, and to see whether or no we should be knit together in the same unity and love as formerly we had been. On

[1] [About three quarters of a mile from Caxton, in Cambridgeshire, and seven or eight miles from Fenstanton.]

the 23rd day they came to our meeting according to our desire; but, so soon as opportunity gave leave, Thomas Bagley asked whether a man might not have some manifestations of the Spirit above the scriptures, which question occasioned much discourse between us. At length, they, with one consent, declaring that they had great manifestations of the Spirit of God, [2] we asked them how we should know it was the Spirit of God, seeing there is the spirit of truth and the spirit of error? They answered, that if it spake Godlike, it was the Spirit of God. We replied again, that we did not know what was Godlike but by the holy scriptures, and we desired to know whether they would be tried by the scriptures. They answered, all with one consent, that they could not tell. Whereupon our discourse brake off: only we desired them to take heed of despising the scriptures, and of slighting the ordinances of our God; which they did much at that time, saying, that as for prayer, preaching, breaking of bread, they had no need of them, they were nothing to them; yet they could do them, but they cared not whether they did or no.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE,
THOMAS COXE.

[2] [George Fox thus speaks of the manifestations he enjoyed at this time, "Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus; so that I say I was come up to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. I was taken up in spirit to see into another or more stedfast state than Adam's in innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus, that should never fall. Great things did the Lord lead me into, and wonderful depths were opened unto me, beyond what can by words be declared."—Journal, i. 95, edit. 1827. The baptist churches were at this time much troubled by the quakers. See Broadmead Records, pp. 43, 55.]

On the 7th day of the tenth month, we met at Fenystanton, where it was agreed by us that a letter should be sent to our brethren at Yelling,[3] to see whether they would, by any means, be reconciled according to the scriptures. Whereupon this ensuing letter was drawn up, and accordingly sent :—

To the brethren at Yelling, called to the faith and obedience of the gospel of Christ, greeting.

Beloved Brethren,—Grace, mercy, and peace, be multiplied unto you, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love: who according to the will of God, gave himself for our sins, that He might purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God; that being bought with a price, and that not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, we should glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are of God; to whom, from us and all saints, be ascribed all honour, glory, and power, both now and for evermore. Amen.

Brethren, we do much rejoice to hear of the great manifestations that God (if it be as ye say) hath been pleased to give unto you: earnestly desiring that the Lord would be pleased to confirm you more and more, until you be perfected in the knowledge of God. For it is our desire, and above all things we wish, that all the Lord's people were prophets; and nothing would more rejoice us than both to hear and see the prospering of the souls of the saints, in the knowledge and obedience of the truth, and unfeigned love of the brethren. But, beloved, we wonder much to hear that you are in doubt how you should try or examine the spirits. What? know ye not your own minds, that you

[3] [Yelling is in Huntingdonshire, about five miles from Fenstanton.]

ought to try the spirits by the scriptures, which are able to make a man of God perfect unto salvation? Therefore we beseech you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you would meditate upon the holy scriptures, and receive them as a light to your feet, and as a lantern unto your paths, to guide your feet in the way of truth, and in no wise receive any inward manifestations above or contrary to the written word. Consider the words of Paul to the church of Corinth, who were enriched with every thing in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that they came behind in no gift; yet the apostle exhorts them that they would learn, by the example of him and the rest of the apostles, not to think, or be wise, above that which is written. 1 Cor. iv. 6. Yea, although an angel from heaven should preach unto you, if it be besides the word of the gospel, do not receive him, but let him be accursed. Gal. i. 8.

Brethren, consider that the Lord hath left us his word to guide us and instruct us, and by that we shall be judged at the last day, and by that doubtful matters must be tried. For God commanded the children of Israel that if there arose a matter too hard for them in judgment, they should come unto the priests, the Levites, and *according to the sentence of the law which they shall tell thee, and according to the judgment which they shall teach thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left,* Deut. xvii. 11; which was written for our instruction, that we might learn to decide all causes by the word of the Lord, and by the law of the Holy One of Israel. For *the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes.* Psalm xix. 7, 8. *Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* Jer. xxiii. 29.

Brethren, consider the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, in the second epistle, iii. 14, *Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of.* Now what things were those which Timothy had learned and was to continue in? It is answered in the next verse. From a child he had known the holy scriptures, which are able to make a man of God wise unto salvation. Now if the knowledge of the scriptures will make us wise unto salvation, what need we search for any manifestation above the scriptures? *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* Now if the scriptures will teach us, reprove us, correct us, and guide and instruct us, and that in righteous things, then let us look for no other rule; but let us order our steps by the word, following the exhortation of our Saviour, John v. 39, *Search the scriptures . . . . . for they are they which testify of me.* As Isaiah saith, ch. viii. 20, *To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* Moreover we have the example of the Bereans, Acts xvii. 11, who, although they heard Paul himself preach, yet they searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so or no, which was accounted a very noble act. In likewise Paul, who, although he heard a voice from heaven, yet was sent unto Ananias to know what he should do, Acts ix. 6. Also, although Cornelius the centurion had an angel of God who appeared to him, and declared that his prayers and alms were come up for a memorial before God, yet he must send to Joppa for one Simon, whose surname was Peter, and he should tell him what he should do, Acts x. 4, 5, and that by the scriptures, ver. 43, which are that most sure word of prophecy, 2 Pet. i. 19, which shall endure for ever, 1 Pet. i. 25, whereunto ye do well if you take heed, as unto a most sure and safe rule. And, truly, he will not be safe, who, neglecting the scriptures,

resteth upon some inward inspirations above them, which oftentimes are false, but always doubtful. Wherefore beloved brethren, in the bowels of love we desire you to take heed of such high-minded and dangerous temptations, for the Spirit of God never refuseth to be tried by the scripture, but the spirit of Antichrist refuseth it; as saith Christ, John iii. 20, 21, *Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.* We beseech you, brethren, suffer a word of exhortation, and do not despise the word of the Lord. For he that despiseth the word shall be destroyed, Prov. xiii. 13. And *as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust, which have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel,* Isaiah v. 24. Do not slight the ordinances of the Most High. How say you that you can obey the ordinances of the Lord (as prayer, preaching, breaking of bread, &c.), and you care not whether you do or no? which is to be neither hot nor cold. We beseech you lay aside all such carelessness and lukewarmness, and be not high-minded but fear. For truly they are in a worse condition that are filled with carelessness and lukewarmness in the ways of God, than those that deny them to be the ways of the Lord. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees; lest that is spoken to you which was spoken to the church of Loadicea, Rev. iii. 15, *I know*

[4] [In the following and similar language, George Fox was wont to address his followers at this time: "Mark and consider in silence, in the lowliness of mind, and thou wilt hear the Lord speak unto thee in thy mind."—Fox's Journal, i. 122. To his opponents and others he affirmed, "The Lord sent me to you to warn you," "I am moved to warn you," "The Lord moved me twice," &c.—pp. 124, 130, 135.]

thy works. that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert either cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, although we thus speak; for we write not these things as judging you, but in love to warn you, that you might take heed of the temptations of Satan, and continue stedfast in the ways of our Lord God; to whom, with his Son and blessed Spirit, be all honour, praise, and thanksgiving, both now and for evermore. Amen.

Brethren, our desires are to know your resolutions in these particulars. On the 4th day of the eleventh month, being the first day of the week, we do intend (if God permit) to meet at Caxton Pastures, and we should be glad, if you please to come, to see you there; but if not, we should desire you to appoint some time and place where we should meet with you, to reason concerning these things. We desire that brother Burges should see these lines. Brethren, farewell; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Your brethren assembled together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EDMOND MAILE, JOHN DENNE,
THOMAS COXE, JAMES DISBROWE.

Fenystanton, 19th day, tenth month.

On the 4th day of the eleventh month, we met (according to appointment) at Caxton Pastures, expecting an answer from Yelling; but they, contrary to our expectation, slighted our words, contemned and despised our admonitions, and refused either to come or appoint a place to meet in. Being after-

wards asked the reason they did not come, it was answered, that they were resolved now not to try the spirits by the scriptures: the word, they said, they did not deny, which word is God himself; but as for the letter (which we call the word), they would not be guided by it. And the reason they did not come was, because they knew we would multiply many scriptures, and which, peradventure, they might not answer. Therefore they thought it better to stay away than come.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE,
JAMES DISBROWE.

On the 19th day of the eleventh month (meeting at Fenystanton), John Ofley, and Elizabeth Ofley his wife, of Fenystanton, were excommunicated, 1 Tim. i. 19, (being formerly admonished and reproved according to the rules of scripture), for these ensuing reasons, viz.:—1st, For forsaking the assembly of the saints; 2ndly, For denying all the ordinances of the Lord, as prayer, preaching, baptism, breaking of bread, &c., adding, moreover, that they were grown to perfection, and they would not follow the example of the apostles, who, as they said, were imperfect creatures; 3rdly, For slighting of the scriptures; 4thly, For saying that all things are God, yea, that they are gods; 5thly, For saying that God is the author of all actions, and that the creature is but a mere passive creature; 6thly, For saying that there is no sin; 7thly, For despising and contemning the admonitions of the church; all of which things they did maintain with stubbornness.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE,
THOMAS COXE.

On the 19th day of the eleventh month, John Hatten, of Fenystanton (being formerly admonished and reproved, according to the rules of scripture, Matt. xviii. 15.) was excommunicated for these ensuing reasons:—1st, For forsaking the assembly of the saints; 2ndly, For marrying a wife contrary to the advice and counsel of the church, she being an infidel; 3rdly, For returning to the church of England and committing many heavy and grievous crimes, as drunkenness, swearing, &c.; 4thly, For neglecting to hear the admonitions of the church; all which things he did wilfully run into, confessing that for the time to come he should do the like.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE,
THOMAS COXE.

On the 15th day of the twelfth month, we met at Caxton Pastures, where we received a letter from Yelling, in answer to the letter that we did send to them on the 19th day of the tenth month. (For which see page 3).

A copy of the letter that we received from Yelling:—

Whereas you say the word shall judge us at the last day; we confess that God is the word, and by him we desire to be judged. We had thought the Levitical law had been abolished; but being [not so] you send us to it; when you prove yourselves priests and Levites, we will come to you. Whereas you say, the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, and making wise the simple: we confess it is so; but not the written law, in the letter. Whereas you say, "Is not my word like a fire? and a hammer to break in pieces:" we confess it, but not the written word. Whereas you bring that of Paul to Timothy,

we do continue in the things which we have learned. Whereas you bring that of John v. 39:—"Search the scriptures;" now we would know whether the scriptures give life, or Christ; because Christ saith, Ye will not come to me that you might have life.[5] If life, then light: no light, no life. Whereas you send us to the Bereans; had they life by searching of the scriptures, or by Christ? Whereas you bring that of Paul and Ananias, the centurion and Peter, you thought we were ignorant of the scriptures; and you did well; which overthrows all that you have written to us. For all that was spoken to them was by voice, angel, and vision. The Spirit said to Peter, *Three men seek thee.* We thought you had known that the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Whereas you bring that of Peter, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which ye do well if you take heed as unto a light in a dark place;"[6] we hope you will agree with the word, "until the dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts;" according to that of Paul,—*know ye not that Christ is in you except you be reprobates.* Ye say ye do much rejoice we have a manifestation, earnestly desiring that the Lord would be pleased to confirm us more and more, until we become perfect men in Christ, and afterwards tell us we have the spirit of antichrist, and parallel us

[5] [George Fox, after referring to the various doctrines which he received, says, "These things I did not receive by the help of man, nor by the letter (though they are written in the letter), but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God, by whom the holy scriptures were written."—Journal, i. 101.]

[6] [On hearing this text preached from in a church at Nottingham in the year 1649, the preacher declaring that by the scriptures men must try all religions and opinions, George Fox thus relates his emotions: "Now the Lord's power was so mighty upon me, and so strong in me, that I could not hold, but was made to cry out, and say, "Oh, no, it is not the scriptures:" but I told them what it was, namely, the Holy Spirit, by which the holy men of God gave forth the scriptures, whereby opinions, religions, and judgments, were to be tried." His zeal brought upon him confinement in "a nasty stinking prison."—Journal, i. 106.]

out to Laodicea; we supposed you had the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God never dissembleth after this manner. Paul setteth down the deeds of the flesh and of the Spirit, the one hatred, and the other love, with other words; and then he saith, *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts; if we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.* Now when God speaks of the new covenant, he speaketh not of writing, in the letter, but in the heart. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. Now the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.*

THOMAS BAGLEY,
JOHN RICH.

On the 26th day of the twelfth month, John Collins, of Fenystanton (being formerly admonished, according to the rules of scripture, Matt. xviii. 15), was excommunicated.

First, For forsaking the assembly of the saints.

Secondly, For slighting all the ordinances, and returning to the church of England.

Thirdly, For drunkenness, swearing, &c. &c.

Fourthly, For despising and contemning the admonitions of the church.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE,
THOMAS COXE.

ANNO DOMINI, 1652.

On the 11th day of the first month, Christopher Lindsey and his wife, of Hemingford Gray[7] (being formerly admonished and reproved according to the rules of scripture, Titus iii. 10), were excommunicated for these ensuing reasons, viz. :

First, For forsaking the assembly of the saints.

Secondly, For slighting and despising all the ordinances of God.

Thirdly, For denying to be guided and ruled by the holy scripture.

Fourthly, For affirming that men in all things do the will of God, and that God is the author of all their actions.

Fifthly, For despising and contemning the admonitions of the church.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE.

On the 11th day of the first month, William Martin and his wife, and William Grange and Robert Grange, of Hemingford Gray (after due admonition and reproof, according to the rules of scripture, Titus iii. 10), were excommunicated for these ensuing things, viz. :—

First, For forsaking the assembly of the saints.

Secondly, For slighting and despising all the ordinances of God.

Thirdly, For denying to be guided and ruled by the scriptures; saying, that they were in liberty, and they would not be brought into bondage again.

Fourthly, For despising and resisting the reproofs and admonitions of the church.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE.

[7] [About a mile and a half from St. Ives, Huntingdonshire.]

On the 12th day of the first month, Thomas Bagley and his wife, of Yelling, and William Burges, of Toseland (after due admonition and reproof, according to the rules of scripture, Tit. iii. 10), were excommunicated for these ensuing reasons, viz.:—

First, For forsaking the assembly of the saints.

Secondly, For denying to be guided and ruled by the holy scriptures.

Thirdly, For slighting and despising all the ordinances of God.

Fourthly, For despising and contemning the reproofs and admonition of the church.

JAMES DISBROWE,
EDMOND MAILE,
THOMAS COXE.

On the 12th day of the first month, John Rich and his wife, of Yelling (having long time absented themselves, and were under the reproof and admonition of the church), were reconciled to the congregation, and professed their willingness to obey all the commandments of the Lord. Luke xvii. 3.

JAMES DISBROWE,
EDMOND MAILE.

On the 11th day of the second month, Jeremiah Aldrich, of Papworth Everard (having long time absented himself from the congregation, committing many grievous and heinous crimes, as drunkenness, &c.), was reconciled to the congregation with much contrition and confession, Luke xvii. 3; acknowledging that he was hardened in sin through the long continuance therein, but now he was resolved to walk closer unto the ways of God, that thereby he might regain the time that he had lost.

JAMES DISBROWE.
JOHN DENNE.

On the 5th day of the third month, John Yeule, of Somersham (after due reproof and admonition, according to the rules of scripture, Titus iii. 10), was excommunicated for these ensuing reasons, viz.:

First, For forsaking the assembly of the saints.

Secondly, For slighting the ordinances of God, saying, they were too strait a way for him to walk in.

Thirdly, For denying to be guided and ruled by the holy scriptures.

Fourthly, For affirming that all people walk as God would have them.

Fifthly, For despising and contemning the reproofs and admonition of the church.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE.

On the 27th day of the fourth month, there was two shillings given to Elizabeth Gowler of Colne, to satisfy her necessities.

On the 11th day of the sixth month, there was given to Clemt. Phage, of Caxton, com. Cambridge, to satisfy his necessities, five shillings.

On the 27th day of the sixth month, there was three shillings given to Clemt. Phage, of Caxton, com. Cambridge, to satisfy his necessities.

On the 26th day of the seventh month, at a meeting held at Caxton Pastures, county Cambridge, where the elders, deacons, and brethren were assembled together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,—

Brother Maile stood up and declared that there were many persons that had not yet been admonished; and some had been admonished and reproved, but as yet do remain perverse and

obstinate; and others that have professed their willingness to walk in the ways of God, yet no fruit hath appeared in them, "so that we cannot apprehend anything in them but hypocrisy and dissimulation; wherefore, my advice is that, in the first place, we take some order for the proceeding against such persons according to the mind of God revealed in the scriptures."

Whereupon brother Denne stood up and said: "Brethren, brother Maile hath declared that there are many persons which formerly joined with us, but now walk contrary to the will and mind of God (and indeed I could wish it were not so true as our experience doth declare it is); and his advice is that you should proceed in order to admonish and reprove such persons. And to this agree the words of the apostles; as it is written. *If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him,* Luke xvii. 3; And, *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,* Eph. v. 11. Again: *Them that sin rebuke,* 1 Tim. v. 20; yea, reprove and rebuke with all authority; and, *Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith,* Titus i. 13.

"And when ye are gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus, *deliver such an one to Satan,* 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. To this also agreeth the example of the builders of old, who although there was much rubbish, yet there were bearers of burdens appointed by Nehemiah to remove it, Nehem. iv. 10. Wherefore, my sentence is, that with great diligence we follow after these things, having our hands strong against all blasphemies."

Whereupon the congregation did agree that this thing was very necessary, and accordingly did order and with one consent appoint brother Maile, brother Denne, and brother Disbrowe, to go unto Yelling to reprove John Rich and his wife; and brother Maile and brother Browne to go unto Over, Erith, Bluntisham, and Sutton in the Isle, to speak with those that formerly joined with us, but now some of them are

returned to the church of England. So likewise, brother Denne and brother Gilman were ordered to go to Aensbury, Sandy, and Sutton, com. Bedford, to know their resolutions.

Afterwards, brother Maile stood up and declared that there was one come down from London, who said that he did belong unto the congregation there, but was in want; therefore, he came down to see if we would bestow anything upon him. Whereupon brother Denne stood up and said: "Beloved brethren; against the administering to the necessities of the saints I will not be, but rather to the utmost of my abilities further it, knowing that it is according to the will of God; for we have the exhortation and example of the apostles and disciples to confirm it, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2; 2 Cor. viii. 9. Yet I think it meet and convenient to proceed in an orderly way, which that we may do I will propound some few things unto your consideration, viz.: That it is the duty of those persons that are in want truly to declare their condition to the church, or to the deacons. My reason is, because otherwise the saints may be blamed when they are not blameworthy; for it is impossible for any man to search into the condition of another, unless it be declared by themselves.

"Secondly, That after due examination had of the condition of any brother by the deacons of the church, they are to declare it to the congregation, or at the least to two or three of them, of which (if it may be) one to be an elder. My reason for this is that, if it should be otherwise, the deacons might afterwards be blamed for doing things according to their own mind; but if this rule be followed they cannot so be blamed.

"Thirdly, That the deacons should give nothing at any time, or to any person, without the consent, at the least, of two or three of the congregation, of which (if it may be) one to be an elder. My reason is this, that the congregation may always know how their stock is laid out.

Fourthly, That if any one belonging to the congregation have any in want that are nearly allied to them, that is to say of their near kindred, as husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, grandfather or grandmother, uncle or aunt, cousin, &c., they are (to the utmost of their abilities) to relieve them, and not to suffer them to be burdensome to the church. To this agreeth the words of the apostle; *If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own kindred, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel,* 1 Tim. v. 8. Again: *If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged,* 1 Tim. v. 16.

Fifthly, That if the congregation are not able to relieve those that are amongst them, but are forced to send to other congregations for help, yet they ought not to send any person in want, either with or without a letter, to gather up their liberality for himself; but they ought rather to send a man that is not in want, of whose fidelity they have had experience, that he might receive their liberality, and also bring it to the congregation. My reason is that, if we should send a person in want to gather money for himself, he might at other times and other places make use of that, contrary to the will and desire of the church, as our own experience will declare that many have done the like.

Sixthly, That if any person in want should come of himself from any congregation unto us for relief, we should not relieve them unless we are sent unto by an able and faithful man, as aforesaid. My reason is, because our experience doth declare, to which some of you are witnesses, that many persons have made a trade of going from place to place to seek relief, which will be prevented by this order.

Seventhly, That no person shall, at any time, be relieved by the congregation but such as, to the utmost of their abilities, do use all lawful means for their subsistence; to this agreeth the words of the apostle, *That if any would not work*

neither should he eat, 2 Thess. iii. 10. Brethren, now I have begun, I will add a few more things which I do conceive to be good and convenient, viz.:—

First, That the deacons should give up their accounts every half-year, at the least; because our experience doth declare that some denying their principles, have been excommunicated without giving up any accounts, to the loss of the congregation. I do not question any now, nor think of such a thing; yet I conceive it will be convenient for both parties.

Secondly, That all those children that are born of any belonging to the congregation should be registered.

Thirdly, That all those that are married in the congregation should be registered, for the preventing of danger and trouble that otherwise may come upon us. As it is written, A wise man foreseeing danger will prevent it.

These things, brethren, have I presented to your consideration; although there is not express scripture for the proving of some of them, yet I conceive that, if upon due consideration they be found to be honest, true, or of good report, they may be embraced; from the words of the apostle, saying, "Whatsoever things are true, or honest, or just, or pure, or lovely, or of good report; if there be any virtue, &c., and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. iv. 8.

Then, upon due consideration, it pleased the elders, deacons, and the whole church to agree and consent unto these ensuing things, viz.:—

First, That it is the duty of persons that are in want truly to declare their condition to the church, or to the deacons.

Secondly, That after due examination had of the condition of any brother by the deacons of the church, they are to declare it to the congregation, or at the least to two or three of them, of whom (if it may be) one to be an elder.

Thirdly, That the deacons shall give nothing, at any time,

or to any person, without the consent, at the least, of two or three of the congregation, of which (if it may be) one to be an elder.

Fourthly, That if any one belonging to the congregation have any in want that are nearly allied to them, that is to say, of their near kindred, as husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, grandfather or grandmother, uncle or aunt, nephew, &c., they shall, to the utmost of their abilities, relieve them, and not suffer them to be burdensome to the church.

Fifthly, That if the congregation are not able to relieve those that are in want amongst them, but are forced to send to other congregations for help, yet they shall not send any person in want, neither with nor without a letter, to gather their liberality for himself; but they shall send a man that is not in want, of whose fidelity they have had experience, that he may receive their liberality, and also bring it to the congregation.

Sixthly, That if any person in want shall come of his own accord from any congregation unto us for relief, we will not relieve them, unless we are sent unto by the hands of an able and faithful brother, as aforesaid.

Seventhly, That no person shall, at any time, be relieved by the congregation but such as, to the utmost of their abilities, do use all lawful means for their subsistence.

Eighthly, That the deacons shall give up their accounts every half-year, at the least.

Ninthly, That all those children that are born of any belonging to the congregation, shall be registered.

Tenthly, That all those that are married in the congregation, shall be registered.

Agreed upon and ordered, that these things, and all other acts of the congregation, shall be recorded.

JOHN DENNE, JAMES DISBROWE,
JO. GILMAN, EDMOND MAILE.

On the 2nd day of the eighth month, brother Denne and brother Gilman did, according to former order and appointment (see p. 16), go to Sandy, to Elizabeth Browne; who, after some converse with brother Denne and brother Gilman, did confess that there was a fault in her, in absenting herself so long from the congregation, and did return thanks to the congregation for their care over her, in sending to her to know her condition and to reprove her for her faults, and did bless the Lord for it, professing that she did account it a token of the love of God towards her; as it is written, *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil that will not break my head*, Psa. cxli. 5. Again: "Because the Lord loveth thee, therefore he sendeth his prophets to reprove thee." Moreover, she did profess much willingness to walk in all the commandments of the Lord, and did promise to come to the congregation to give satisfaction in the presence of them all.

JOHN DENNE,
JO. GILMAN.

On the 2nd day of the eighth month, brother Denne and brother Gilman, according to former order (see p. 16), did go to Sutton, com. Bedford, to the widow Sanders, who had long time absented herself from the congregation; and as soon as they were entered into her house brother Denne opened his mouth, and said: "The cause of our coming, at this time, is this; the congregation taking into their serious consideration (see p. 16) that many persons have long time absented themselves and not been admonished, did order and agree that all those persons should be speedily admonished, and accordingly did order and appoint brother Gilman and myself to come unto you, to admonish you and to know your resolutions."

Whereupon she said that she did not know her own resolutions, and therefore could not declare them to us. Then

brother Denne said: "What! know you not your own mind? whether or no you are resolved to walk in the ways of God?" She said that she did walk in the ways of God, and so did we; so did those people that did live under episcopal and presbyterial government, and those that walked under no ordinances; they all walk as God would have them. Then brother Denne answered and said: "You have spoken of many ways, and that they are all the ways of God; we desire you to prove what you have said. For our parts we know no way that is revealed in the scriptures but that way which we now walk in; and unless you can show us another way by the scriptures we shall not believe you; for the prophet saith, *To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,*" Isa. viii. 20. She said, that her own experience declareth that God's way is both in ordinances and out of them. Then brother Denne said that we had not so learned Christ, as to be guided by the experience of every person; but we have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which we must take heed, 2 Pet. i. 19. She answered that the history spake of one way, but the mystery declared another. Whereupon brother Denne said: "It seemeth something strange that you should make God to be a dissembler, to speak one thing and secretly to intend another; yet for our parts we believe no such thing, but desire to be guided by the written word." Then brother Denne began to prove by the scriptures, that those ways as she spake of were contrary to the word of God. Unto which she said, that truly she was never questioned of these things before, and therefore was not provided to answer; but for her part she had received greater attainments, and was resolved not to go back again to such low things. Whereupon brother Denne and brother Gilman did reprove her for slighting the ordinances of God. And with many other words did they admonish and reprove, wishing her to take heed of inward inspirations, which oftentimes are

false, but always doubtful; and desiring her to keep close unto the word of God, even that which she calls the history, and to return to those ways which she accounts low, but indeed are according to the mind of God.

JOHN DENNE,
JO. GILMAN.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Henry Browne, according to former order and appointment (see p. 15), did go to Bluntisham, com. Huntingdon, to Anne Marriat; to whom, after they had declared that they were sent by the congregation, Edmond Maile stood up and said: "You have long time absented yourself from the congregation, forsaking those things which formerly you did believe and practise; for which cause we do intend to proceed according to order. And, moreover, we have heard that you were confederate with a man in stealing of goods, for which afterwards he was hanged; and that you either are with or have had a child by the same man." She confessed that these things were true. Then Edmond Maile replied and said that, unless the congregation did see that she did bring forth fruits meet for repentance, they would cast her forth for her wickedness and uncleanness. Then she said that she could not help it. Edmond Maile asked her, why she could not help it? She answered that it was not necessary to declare the reason. Then Edmond Maile replied and said, that it was an aggravation of her sin to say she could not help it. Then she said that she had often come over to us but we did not regard her. To which Edmond Maile replied, and told her that as she had often come over to us, so she was both regarded and relieved; and he did also tell her that she was always discontented when she came; and further, he said that, if she had not been regarded, that was no rule for her so heinously to sin, and then say she could not help it. Then Edmond Maile and Henry Browne did reprove

her for her wickedness, and did declare the resolution of the church that, if fruits meet for repentance did not appear in her, they would proceed speedily.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Henry Browne did go to Holywell, com, Huntingdon, to our sister Smith; unto whom Edm. Maile stood up and declared to her that she had long time absented herself from the congregation, "for which cause brother Browne and myself are at this time sent unto you, by the appointment of the church, to see whether or no you do stand firm in the faith." She answered, saying: "I am the same that formerly I have been; but it is true I have a long time absented myself, and it is because I was informed that you would not suffer any to come into your assemblies except they were of our own judgment." Then Hen. Browne replied and said: "You are misinformed, there is no such matter; but, indeed, I was a long time mistaken in the same kind." Then she excused herself and said: "When I did use to come to your meetings my house was not well ordered, and by that reason there was a scandal raised upon me; and, moreover, now I have been taken with a private walking wherein I have found comfort." To which Edm. Maile replied and said: "It is not a sufficient excuse for you to forsake the assembly of the people of God to avoid scandal, when it is that which we are to look for in this world; and for your private walking you have no warrant in the scriptures, which saith: *Those that feared the Lord spake often one to another*, Mal. iii. 16. Then Edm. Maile and Hen. Browne did exhort her not to receive that which she could not warrant by the scriptures, and they did also declare the resolutions of the church, to proceed according to rule, in casting out such persons as would not walk according to the rules of scripture.

Then she said she would strive, and she would come to us at the next general meeting.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Hen. Browne, according to former order and appointment (see page 15), did go to Erith, com. Huntingdon, to Anne Pharepoint; to whom Edmund Maile said: "The cause of our coming at this time is, to know whether you are willing to walk with the congregation in the practice of the ordinances of Christ, and those examples which Christ and his apostles left for us to follow." She answered that it was her desire. Then Edmond Maile said, "We desire to know your mind concerning that which was charged against you, viz., for taking a husband contrary to the mind of the congregation." She answered that she thought it was no sin. Then Edmond Maile replied, and said, "If you have not sinned, then the church has sinned in charging of you." Then she said, "Indeed I do remember it was said in the law to the children of Israel, that they should not marry their daughters to strangers, for they will turn away their hearts from the Lord; but I have such an husband that doth not hinder me." Then Edm. Maile replied and said, "There were none under the law but Jews and Gentiles. All that were not of Israel were strangers. There is now none but the church and the world; if your husband were not of the church, he must be of the world, and so a stranger; and if a stranger, then he will turn your heart from the Lord." Deut. vii. 3. Moreover, he said, "Do you think we went according to the rule in this thing?" She said, "Yea." "Then," said Edm. Maile, "you do confess what we say; for if we go according to the rule in charging you, then is yours a sin." Then Edm. Maile and Hen. Browne declared the care the con-

gregation had over her, and how they did earnestly desire her welfare and increase in the knowledge of God. Then she said that she was very joyful, and did return thanks to the congregation, and declared that she would come to the congregation.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Henry Browne, according to former order and appointment, (see page 15,) did go to Over, com. Cambridge, to——Peppers, and desired her to send to the widow Binns and——Sneesby. And when they were come, Edmond Maile said, "We are sent by the congregation to you, that we might know your minds, concerning those things which formerly you did believe and practise." They with one consent answered, that they did believe those ways to be true, and that every one that seeth them to be so ought to walk in them, and did sin if they did not; but for those that do not see them to be so, they walk in the way of God, and are where God would have them to be. Then Edmond Maile desired them to prove what they said; but they could not. Therefore Edmond Maile and Henry Browne did declare unto them that they had been very erroneous in their minds, as they had formerly declared, and did not yet appear to be the same; and they did reprove them for it, and did exhort them to walk in the ways of God, and to take heed of receiving that for which they had no ground in scripture.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Henry Browne, according to former order and appointment (see page 15), did go to Sutton, in the Isle of Ely, to William Eppings and his wife, but he was not at home. But

his wife received us joyfully, and sent for Judah Westland, who immediately came. And after we had declared the cause of our coming, they were very joyful, and promised to come unto the congregation.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Henry Browne did go to Phillip Eppings and Joan Purcase, in Sutton aforesaid; who, after Edmond Maile had declared the cause of their coming, were very joyful, and did return thanks unto the congregation, professing their willingness to walk with us in the ways of God. Moreover, Phillip Eppings did promise to come unto the congregation.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Henry Browne went to John Eppings and his wife, in Sutton aforesaid. He was not at home, and his wife was very ill. But Edmond Maile said, "We are sent by the church unto you, to see whether you do continue in those things which formerly you did believe and practise." She answered and said, "I cannot tell. I am as I must be until it please God to bring me out." Then Edmond Maile said, "We hear you have sprinkled two children." She said it was true. Edmond Maile asked by what rule? She answered, "I cannot tell; they are done, and I think they are never the worse." Then Edmond Maile replied and said, "'Tis true they are not the worse, but you that were the cause of it are the worse; both you and your husband have sinned in doing of it, and you have also sinned in saying that you are as you must be, when it is God's pleasure his people should do well." Then Edmond Maile and brother Brown did reprove her for these things, and did also declare the mind of the congrega-

tion concerning those persons that did blame God for their evil actions, as if it were God's will they should sin and be idle.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 6th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile and Henry Browne went to William Grounds and his wife, in Sutton aforesaid (p. 15); to whom Edmond Maile said: "We are sent by the congregation to see whether you stand fast in those things which formerly you have believed." William Grounds answered and said: "I think it will but cause disturbance for me to speak, and therefore it will be better to be silent." Edm. Maile said: "For our parts we shall not be disturbed." Then Will. Grounds said: "Concerning that way you spake of, they that are in it may find comfort; as for others they may find comfort in other ways, they being also the ways of God; for the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man for to direct his steps, and God made all things for himself, yea, the wicked for the *day of evil;* and it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, and for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show my power in thee," Jer. x. 23; Prov. xvi. 4; Phil. ii. 13; Rom. ix. 17. Then Edmond Maile, after he had answered these scriptures, asked him whether that he thought all actions were of and from God. He answered; "Yea, it is God that worketh in us to will and to do," Phil. ii. 13. Then Edmond Maile replied and said: "We grant that it is God that puts the creature into a capacity both to will and to do, but it doth not therefore follow that all actions are of God; for if all actions were of God, then would they be all good; yea, swearing, drunkenness, whoredom, all filthy communication would be good; and if so, then what meaneth these sayings: *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for dark-*

ness, Isa. v. 20." Then William Grounds said: "I told you at the first we should not agree, and now I will be silent." His wife, likewise, consenting to all that her husband spake, Edm. Maile and Hen. Browne did admonish and reprove them, exhorting them to consider from whence they are fallen and repent. They did also declare the mind of the congregation, then to proceed according to the most righteous law of God, in purging themselves from such blasphemers of the Most High, 1 Tim. i. 18.

EDMOND MAILE.

On the 10th day of the eighth month, Elizabeth Brown, of Sandy, com. Bedford, who had long time absented herself from the congregation, according to her former promise (p. 20), did come unto us, being assembled at Caxton Pastures, and was reconciled.

JOH. DENNE,
JO. GILMAN.

On the 13th day of the eighth month, Edmond Maile, John Denne, and James Disbrowe, according to former order and appointment (p. 15), did go to Yelling, com. Huntingdon, to Joh. Rich and his wife, who formerly were reconciled unto the congregation, yet contrary to their promise did absent themselves from the congregation, denying the ordinances of God; but Joh. Rich not being at home, Edmond Maile spake to his wife, saying: "We, being sent by the congregation, are now come unto you to know your resolutions." She answered that she would say no more than she had said formerly. Then Edmond Maile desired her to desist from such stubbornness, and wishing of her not to slight the scriptures, she replied and said that she did not slight them. Edmond Maile answered and said: "In that you do refuse to be guided by them, you do slight them." She replied and said: "No;

although I will not be guided by the scriptures, yet do I not slight them." Then Joh. Denne began to prove that all those that will not be guided by the scriptures do slight them. Whereupon she went out of the house, and after we had sat a little while we (all) went out after her, desiring her to return to that which she was fallen from. She said she could say no more than she had said. Then Joh. Denne asked her, whether she was now in the way of God; but she did not answer any thing. Then Joh. Denne asked her, whether she was in the way of God when she walked with us? To that she answered and said: "What I was I was, and what I am I am; I did see that I could not walk any longer in that way but I must be an hypocrite." Then James Disbrowe said: "Brethren, what need we any further testimony, she doth plainly declare that her mind is contrary to the ways of God, for she cannot walk in them without hypocrisy?" So with one consent, having formerly admonished and reproved her according to the rules of scripture, Titus iii. 10, we did excommunicate her for these ensuing reasons, viz.:—

First. For dissimulation and hypocrisy; she professing her willingness to obey the commandments of God, when that she did utterly deny them, viz., preaching, baptism, meetings, breaking of bread, &c., as both her tongue and practice did declare; for from the time of her reconciliation to this day, she was never with the congregation (p. 13).

Secondly. For denying to be guided and ruled by the holy scriptures.

Thirdly. For utterly despising and contemning the reproof and admonition of the church.

Joh. Denne,
James Disbrowe,
Edmond Maile.

On the 20th day of the 8th month, John Denne and John Gilman, according to former order and appointment

(p. 16), did go to Aensbury, com. Huntingdon, to Will. Marriat and his wife, who at first were very stubborn, declaring that they had nothing to say to us; but after we did reprove them for their stubbornness they were more gentle. After which, we did declare the great care the congregation had of them, and how earnestly they did desire their welfare, and would be glad to see them. Then they answered, "That it may be we will come." Then we did reprove them for their sin, and exhort them to continue stedfast in the ways of God.

JOHN DENNE,
JO. GILMAN.

On the 24th day of the eighth month, Sister Smith, of Holywell, com. Hunt., and Phillip Eppings, and Judah Westland, of Sutton, in the Isle of Ely, according to their former promise (pp. 23, 26), did come unto the congregation, we being met at Fenystanton, com. Hunt., and were reconciled to us. And afterwards Phillip Eppings did desire the congregation to send over some unto them. Whereupon the congregation did order and appoint John Denne and Edmond Maile to go to Sutton aforesaid, to confirm those that would be reconciled according to the scriptures, and to proceed according to order with those that remain perverse and obstinate.

JOHN DENNE, EDMOND MAILE,
JAMES DISBROWE, JO. GILMAN.

On the 11th day of the ninth month, John Denne and Edmond Maile, according to former order and appointment (see above), did go to Sutton in the Isle of Ely, to confirm those that were willing to walk in the ways of God, and to proceed according to order with those that would not. And coming thither, we found some of them gathered together, viz., William Eppings and his wife, Phillip Eppings, Jane Pur-

case, and Judah Westland. And after salutations past between us, we asked for John Eppings and his wife, and William Grounds and his wife. Judah Westland said, that she thought they would not come. Then Edmond Maile said, that we should be glad to see them; and that we might, we desired William Eppings to go unto them to desire them to come, and accordingly he did go. But they all refused to come, except John Eppings, who came unto us. Then, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven for wisdom and understanding, John Denne did declare unto them at large the cause of our coming to them, and the earnest desires of the congregation towards them, even that they would be reconciled to the church, and walk in all the ways of God, which would be great rejoicing to their brethren that pray night and day for you. Then all those that were gathered together before we came, confessed that they had been very careless a long time, for which thing they were very sorry; but now they were resolved to walk closer to the ways of God, redeeming the time they had lost. Whereupon John Denne and Edmond Mayle did, with many words, declare their joy and consolation, returning praise unto God on their behalfs, even for their reconciliation. And, moreover, did exhort them to stand fast in the faith, and to take heed of being so ensnared by the devil for time to come. Then Phillip Eppings did desire us to declare unto them, for their satisfaction, what grounds we had for laying on of hands. Whereupon we did lay open the scriptures, proving from them that laying on of hands was a truth, and ought to be practised. After which Edmond Mayle spake to John Eppings, saying, "You have a long time absented yourself from the congregation; for which cause they did send unto you once before, but you were not at home (p. 26). And now we are come again unto you to know your resolutions, whether or no you have persevered in the faith, and whether

you do now desire to continue in those things which formerly you have believed and practised." To which he answered, saying, "I do desire to walk in all the ways of God, according as he shall move me." Then Jo. Denne replied and said, "You have not given us a satisfactory answer; for indeed there are many in our days that do walk contrary to the ways of God; yet they will say that they will walk in the ways of God, and according as God doth move them. Therefore, our desire is, that you would declare your mind concerning those ways and ordinances that formerly you did walk in." To which he said, "Do not all men walk as God would have them?" To which Joh. Denne said, "No; for God complains of some men, saying, 'You have despised my counsel, and would have none of my reproofs.' Prov. i.25. Surely they did not walk according to the mind of God; for if they had walked according to the mind of God, he would not have complained against them." To this he answered nothing, but was silent. Then John Denne said, "We did hear that you had sprinkled two children." He said he had. John Denne asked him by what ground he did it. He said he did it to congregate them into the church of England. Then John Denne asked him, for what reason he would congregate them into the church of England? To which he answered nothing. Then John Denne asked him, if he thought the church of England were a true church. He answered, "No." Then John Denne did sharply reprove him, saying, "Is this fair dealing? Is this doing as you would be done unto? Would you be willing another man, if it lay in his power, should engraft you into a false church to be partakers of her plagues? for shame, revoke this wicked error, and this unnatural sin, in doing, by your own confession, as much as in you lieth, to congregate and join your children to a false church." Then he said, "Doth not Christ say, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not?*" Mark x. 14. To which

Edmond Mayle answered and said, "Yes; Christ doth say so: but, by your own words, you did your endeavour to carry them from Christ, even to a false church where Christ is not." Then he answered nothing, but was silent. Then we did reprove him for his great sins, and did admonish him to consider from whence he was fallen, and repent; whereupon he went away. Then, after we had poured forth our supplications to the God of heaven for wisdom and understanding, we went to William Grounds and his wife. To whom Edmond Mayle spake, saying, "The congregation did formerly send to you to admonish and reprove you for your so long time absenting yourself from the congregation, and to see and know your condition; but your declarations at that time being very erroneous, (pp. 25, 26), they have now sent again to admonish and reprove you for holding such errors; that if it might be, we may walk lovingly together in the ways of God." Then he said, he was the same that he declared formerly. "The scripture," he said, "was but a dead letter; and it is God that ordereth the actions of men, yea, those that are accounted evil: for, saith the scripture, 'I the Lord make peace and create evil.'" Isaiah xlv. 7. Then Edmond Mayle, after he had answered this scripture, desired to know his mind concerning those ordinances which formerly he had embraced. Both he and his wife answered, that they did not desire to be in such bondage as to observe such outward, ceremonial, and carnal ordinances. Then John Denne asked, whether ever God called them carnal ordinances. He answered, "No; God never called them so, but they are so." And with many other words did he slight and despise the ordinances of God. Whereupon we did reprove them for their errors; but they contemning it, we did, according to the rule of scripture, Titus iii. 10, excommunicate them for these ensuing reasons, viz.:—

First, For absenting themselves from the assembly of the congregation.

Secondly, For denying to be guided and ruled by the Holy Scriptures.

Thirdly, For affirming that all men in all their actions do the will of God.

Fourthly, For slighting and despising all the ordinances of the Lord; saying, that they would not be in such bondage as to observe such low and carnal things.

Fifthly, For despising and contemning the reproof and admonition of the church; all these things they, viz.: he and his wife, did maintain with stubbornness.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAILE.

On the one and twentieth day of the tenth month, John Denne, Edmond Mayle, and James Disbrowe, according to former order and appointment (p. 15), did go to Yelling, in the county of Huntingdon, to speak with John Rich, who was not at home the last time that we were there. But when we came to his house and inquired for him, it was declared unto us that he was not at home, but was gone to Gravely, in the county of Cambridge. Whereupon we went to Gravely, being very desirous to speak with him. But when we came there we found no man but his son, who declared to us that he had not been there that day. Then we conceived that it was a deceit; because we should not speak with him. Whereupon we returned to Yelling, and again inquired for him. But they would not declare where we might find him. After which we returned home, and in the way, considering this dissimulation, and that it was almost impossible to find him, we concluded to send a letter to him, to certify him of

our desires and of our resolutions, if he did not act according to our desires, grounded upon the scriptures.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE,
JAMES DISBROWE.

On the 26th day of the tenth month, according to our former order, we sent this ensuing letter to John Rich of Yelding [Yelling], in the county of Huntingdon, viz.:—

To John Rich, of Yelding.

Whereas formerly, according to the goodness of our God, you have been enlightened by the Spirit of the Most High; and not only so, but also taking upon you the profession of Jesus Christ, being joined to the church of God, according to the command of Jesus our Saviour and Redeemer: yet, notwithstanding, you have, contrary to the mind and will of God revealed in his word, despised the saints of God and the ordinances of the Most High, thereby giving great offence to God and to his saints—for which cause, according to our duties which we owe to God, and our love to you, we have formerly proceeded with you by way of admonition and reproof, to which admonition you did seemingly yield, (we say seemingly, not because we then thought so, but because your actions and practice have since declared it so to be), which, if it had been real, would have caused much joy and rejoicing in our spirits, hoping to have been comforted by you in the house of our God; but the congregation, so clearly by your actions apprehending that it was nothing but hypocrisy and dissimulation that was in you, even drawing nigh to the Lord with your lips when your heart was far from him, did resolve to wash their hands in innocency from such hypocritical and deceitful actions, the authors of which are abomi-

nable in the sight of God, and shall one day be destroyed, taken away, and rooted out of the dwelling place of the most righteous God; and upon this resolution they did appoint us, whose names are hereafter written, to come unto you to admonish and reprove you, that you might either be re-united to the congregation, or else separated from us. And for the accomplishing of which thing we neither spared labour, or grudged the time; but time after time did seek after you, that if by any means we might speak with you. But that could not be brought to pass, by reason of the lying and deceitful speeches of those belonging to you (see p. 34.) Whereupon we did conclude to send a few lines in writing to you, even those which now we have written, to certify you of our resolutions: viz. that if you do not come to our meeting at Fenstanton, the next first day, being the 2nd day of the eleventh month, commonly called January, and give satisfaction to the congregation for so long absenting yourself, and other things which will be laid to your charge, we shall proceed to cut you off from the body of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be all honour, glory, and praise, both now and for evermore. Amen. Farewell.

Yours as we shall find you,

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE.

Caxton Pastures, com. Cambridge,
the 26th day of the tenth month.

On the 1st day of the eleventh month, there was a general meeting holden at Cambridge, where the elders and brethren being assembled, was taken into consideration the difference between brother Gray, an elder, and the congregation: viz. about breaking of bread after supper. And for the finding out of a way for the reconciliation of that difference, much debate there was; but at length, after much discourse and

consideration of the example of Christ, Luke xxii. 19, 20, and the words of the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 24, 25, it was generally concluded from the rule of scripture, that we ought always to break bread after supper, and it was likewise ordered that breaking of bread shall be practised in that manner, viz. after supper[8], throughout the congregations. It was also concluded, that brother Gray had done amiss in proceeding so rashly as to reprove and labour to excommunicate some for the observing of it, and accordingly a letter was drawn up and sent by the hands of Thomas Pratt and Thomas Waller, to blame and reprove him for his temerity, and to desire him to yield unto that which the congregation had agreed upon from the rules of scripture.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE.

On the 2nd day of the 11th month, at a meeting at Fenstanton, in the county of Huntingdon, John Denne and Edmond Maile did declare how far they proceeded with John Rich of Yelding, and declared that they found nothing in him but hypocrisy and dissimulation; "and, moreover, he hath despised all our reproofs, and rejected our counsel, which we made known to him in the letter, so that we ought to proceed to cut him off from the body of our Lord Jesus, according as we have formerly declared" (pp. 34, 35). Whereupon Jeremiah Aldrich did declare unto the congregation, that if they pleased to defer the sentence at this time he would go

[8] [In the judgment of the eminent Thomas Grantham, "The time for duration of this sacred ordinance is determined by our Saviour, but the precise times and seasons wherein the church shall celebrate it are not. Christ gave being to it in his church till he come: his apostles held forth the same, as hath been showed, but left it to the liberty of the churches, how frequently to practise it." Christianismus Primitivus. Book ii. ch. 7, page 94.]

to him, and reprove him for his faults; and bring word to the congregation more plainly what he said. Then the congregation being willing to manifest all patience and long suffering, that if by any means he might be recalled, did order and appoint Jeremiah Aldrich to go to speak with him, and to declare his answer to the congregation.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE.

On the 20th day of the eleventh month, according to former order and appointment, Jeremiah Aldrich did go to Yelling to John Rich, to whom he did declare the desires of the congregation: viz. that he would return to his former zeal, and walk with the congregation in the observation of those ordinances which Christ hath left to be observed in his church. To which John Rich answered, saying, "I think they have nothing to accuse me of, unless it be for absenting of myself; and indeed I have yet no mind to come to the congregation. When I have a mind to come, I will come; but in the mean time I wish they may not proceed rashly."

JEREMY ALDRIDGE.

On the 13th day of the 12th month, at a meeting held at Caxton Pastures, in the county of Cambridge, the congregation taking into their serious consideration the condition of many persons that have left their first love, and turned aside to vain jangling, of which some have been formerly admonished, yet have remained stubborn and perverse; and likewise taking into consideration the words of the Lord, that from such we should turn away;—did resolve, according to the rules of scripture, to proceed against such persons; and accordingly did order and appoint Edmond Mayle, Richard

Elegood, and John Gilman, to go to Aensbury[9], in the county of Huntingdon, to Will. Marriott and his wife, who formerly had been reproved, and yet remained absent from the congregation. Also John Denne and James Disbrowe were appointed to go to Sutton, in the county of Bedford, to the widow Sanders, who had been formerly admonished (p. 20), but yet remained perverse and obstinate in like manner. Thomas Coxe and Thomas Phillips were ordered to go to Over, in the county of Cambridge, to the widow Binns, — Peppers, and — Sneesby, who had also been formerly admonished (p. 25), but yet remained corrupt. Afterwards John Denne declaring the proceedings against John Rich (p. 38) of Yelding, and the congregation taking his actions into serious consideration, they did resolve to excommunicate him, for these ensuing reasons, viz.—

First, For absenting himself from the congregation, contrary to the rules of scripture.

Secondly, For dissimulation and hypocrisy, professing willingness to walk in the ways of God when by his actions he utterly denied them.

Thirdly, For utterly despising and contemning the reproof and admonition of the church; and accordingly did so agree that a letter should be sent unto him to certify the same.

John Denne,
Edmond Mayle.

On the 17th day of the twelfth month, Edmond Mayle, Richard Elegood, and John Gilman, according to former order and appointment (p. 38), did go to Aensbury,[9] in the county of Huntingdon, to William Marriat and his wife; but his wife being newly delivered of a child, we could not speak with her. But the man we spake with, unto whom we declared the cause of our coming: viz. we being sent by the

[9] [Eynsbury, near St. Neots.]

congregation to know whether yet he had considered of their former admonitions (p. 22), and whether he was willing to join with us in the observation of the ordinances of God. To which he answered, saying, "I confess there hath been a digression by me." Then we asked him, if the digression was from better to worse. He answered, "Yea." Then we exhorted him to return from whence he was fallen, and walk in the ways of God. Then he replied and said, "If you mean that I should so join with you as not to join with any other people, I will not do that." Then we answered, saying, "We do not desire that you should so be bound, as always to come to us; but if there be any of the people of God that are nigher to you, you may go to them." Then he said, "I do believe that other people which do not observe those ordinances, are the people of God as well as you." Which thing we desired him to prove by the scriptures; which, when he could not do, we sharply reproved him for his faults, and for believing that which the scriptures will not manifest to be true. Then he said, "It is enough for me to look to myself, I need not look to others." We answered, saying, "Although we are to look to ourselves, yet we are so to look upon all, as to try whether they are the people of God, by those characters as the scriptures mention;" which we desired him to do, and not to believe that of any people which the scriptures will not manifest to be true.

EDMOND MAYLE.

On the three-and-twentieth day of the twelfth month, Thomas Cox, and Thomas Phillips, according to former order and appointment (p. 39), did go to Over, in the county of Camb: to widow Binns, — Peppers, and — Sneesby, unto whom we said, "You having been formerly admonished (p. 25) by messengers from the congregation, but not giving

satisfaction for your sins, the congregation have now sent us to you, to know whether you have yet repented, and are willing to be guided by the scriptures, and to walk in the observation of the ordinances of God." Sneesby answered, saying, "I do own the scriptures, and do find much comfort in them." So said the widow Binns. Then we asked her, why she joined with the church of England in their public worship. She answered that Mr. Pope is a great friend of hers, and she did it to please him. Then we reproved her for her faults; whereupon she and Sneesby promised to come to the congregation. Afterwards we spake unto — Pepper, to know her mind. She declared unto us, saying, "I do own the scriptures, and do love you." We said, "We are very glad to hear it, and should be glad to see you at our meetings." She answered, saying, "I cannot walk in those low dispensations; for God hath manifested himself to my soul that I am his, and that he is my God, and that he hath done by his Spirit." We desired her to make it appear by the scriptures. She answered, saying, "If I should tell you, you would not believe me." We replied, "If you can make it appear according to the scriptures, we will believe you." Then we asked her, whether she had not comfort in those ordinances of God which formerly she walked in? She answered, "Yes, I had; and I durst do no other but yield unto them, for I had much trouble in myself until I had done it." We asked her, what persuaded her, whether the scriptures or any thing else? She said, "The scriptures;" instancing in this, *Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we,* Acts x. 47. "So when I had yielded obedience, I had much comfort in my soul for a time; but troubles in myself and in the church; so that I had as much trouble as before, until I received the manifestation of the love of God to me by his Spirit." We desired her to make what she said

appear to be truth by the scriptures. She answered as before, "You will not believe me." We answered, saying, "We will believe all that the scripture saith;" and moreover, we said, "We confess that the church was in a very low condition; but God of his goodness and mercy hath been pleased to revive them, and to manifest unto them that it is all their duties to go on in the work of the Lord, and accordingly have sent us to you at this time." Then she said, "I can come and join with you; but if I do, I shall be but an hypocrite." Whereupon we did reprove her for sin, and did declare the mind of the congregation; viz.—to put away all such persons from amongst them.

On the five-and-twentieth day of the twelfth month, John Denne, and James Disbrowe, according to former order and appointment (p. 39), did go to Sutton, in the county of Bedford, to the widow Sanders; to whom, after salutations, we spake, saying: "The congregation having formerly sent unto you (p. 20), and having received your answers, and finding them to be erroneous, have now sent us to you to know whether you have repented of your evil, and are willing to be guided by the scriptures, and to walk in the observation of the ordinances of God." She said, "Indeed I have almost forgotten what I declared unto you." Then we repeated them unto her (pp. 20, 21), which things she hearing, she stood to maintain, and multiplied many words to no purpose (which are too tedious here to relate), declaring, as she said, her experience of God; how God had carried her out of one dispensation unto another, and now He had brought her out of those fleshly ordinances which we walk in, and truly she would not be brought back again to them.[1] We desired her to use fewer words, and to prove what she

[1] [She would appear to have adopted the opinions of George Fox, who says that it was his mission, "received through the divine power and Spirit of God, and the light of Jesus," to bring people off "from all the

said by the scriptures. She said, "I believe the manifestation of the Spirit is as sure a rule for me to walk by, as the scriptures are for you." We denied it, proving that that cannot be so safe a rule, because there are many false spirits, 1 John iv. 1. "Wherefore we are commanded to try the spirits, 1 John iv. 1, and the only way of trial is the scriptures, Isa. viii.20, and therefore the scriptures are the safest rule to walk by, 2 Peter i. 19, and we desire to be guided by it all our days." Then she said, "I can prove what I say by the scriptures; but that will not give you satisfaction." Then we replied, saying, "How do you know? doth your conscience tell you that your proofs are so weak that they will not satisfy?" She answered, "No; I believe they are strong enough." Then she instanced in this, *Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* 1 Sam. i. 8. "So," said she, "God hath told me that he is better than all ordinances, and that now I must worship him out of ordinances." We answered, saying: "We confess that God is above all ordinances, yet he is found in them; but that scripture which you have mentioned speaketh of no such thing; and if it did, yet it is too weak to prove what you would have it." Which we made manifest by several demonstrations from the scripture; whereupon she was exceeding angry, saying: "I said I should not satisfy you." And many other angry words did she use, exclaiming against many persons. And when she had ended her exclamations, we did reprove her for her faults, declaring our sorrowfulness for her, in that she refused to be guided by the scriptures and to walk in the observation of the ordinances of Jesus Christ. Here she interrupted us, saying: "I do and will refuse." Whereupon,

world's fellowships, and prayings, and singings, which stood in forms without power; that their fellowships might be in the Holy Ghost, and in the Eternal Spirit of God; that they might pray in the Holy Ghost; and sing in the spirit and with the grace that comes by Jesus," Journal, i. 102.]

with much sorrowfulness for that sinful expression, we did excommunicate her for these ensuing reasons, viz. :—

First, For forsaking the assembly of the saints.

Secondly, For denying to be guided and ruled by the holy scriptures.

Thirdly, For charging God with dissimulation and injustice, saying, that God commands one thing, and secretly intendeth the contrary.

Fourthly, For slighting and despising all the ordinances of God, calling them fleshly ordinances.

Fifthly, For despising and contemning the reproof and admonition of the church.[2]

JOHN DENNE.

ANNO DOMINI, 1653.

On the eight and twentieth day of the first month, Edmond Maile and John Denne met with John Martin, formerly of

[2] [Mr. H. Jessey gives us an interesting account of the restoration to Mr. Kiffin's church, of a person who had fallen into the same errors. This person thus confesses his fault: "Truly, friends, I cannot but speak it with much grief of spirit; I have been held by that deceiver Satan—presenting lies to my spirit, under the pretence of glorious truths:—and the first thing he wrought in me, was an exceeding slight esteem of the scripture, so that the best thoughts and expressions I used of the scripture was, calling it a letter, or ink and paper. And a second thing was a Christ in me, in opposition to the Christ of God; persuading me that to know Christ as he was declared in the scriptures, was to know him after the flesh; so that indeed I was brought to deny any Christ at all, and did not believe there was either angel or spirit, only was convinced by things that do appear, that there was a God; and that all creatures received of this power and spirit, which was their life; and as man was the most excellent creature, so there is more of that spirit manifested in him than in any other creature. And when his life was taken from him, I did believe he should return to the matter of which he was made; and should neither enjoy happiness nor misery; but perish as the brute beasts of the earth." It appears that these and the like views were very prevalent at this period. A Storehouse of Provision, &c., pp. 17–19.]

Hemingford, but now of Ely, who had been formerly admonished and reproved according to the rules of scripture, but yet remained perverse and obstinate; and we desired that we might speak with him, which he refused and offered to go away. Whereupon we desired him to stay; and he staying, we spake to him, saying: "You have a long time absented yourself from the congregation, denying the ordinances of God, for which you have been formerly admonished, but have not given us any satisfactory answer, but tell that we have not God." Here he interrupted us, saying: "I say yet that you have not God;" and then he went away. Whereupon we followed him desiring to speak with him, but he said that he had nothing to say to us, and offered to go away. Then we said, "What! are you afraid to encounter with the truth?" "The truth!" said he, "I know none you have," and so he went away; whereupon we concluded, considering his former answers to our admonitions, to go after him again and to excommunicate him; and, accordingly, [we] went after him, and speaking with him did excommunicate him, for these ensuing reasons, viz.:

First, For forsaking the assembly of the saints.

Secondly, For slighting and despising the ordinances of God.

Thirdly, For despising and contemning the reproof and admonition of the church.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE.

On the four and twentieth day of the second month, at a general meeting at Caxton Pastures, the congregation taking into their serious [consideration] the condition of many persons that have been formerly admonished, yet remain perverse, did resolve to proceed against such persons, and accordingly did appoint Henry Denne, John Gilman, and James Disbrowe, to go

to William Marriatt and his wife, of Aensbury, in the county Huntingdon, who have been formerly admonished (p. 39), but yet remain impenitent. Also, Edmond Maile, Thomas Coxe, and Richard Elegood, were appointed to go to Over, in the county of Cambridge, to the widow Binns,—Peppers, and—Sneesby, and to Bluntisham, in the county of Huntingdon, to Anne Marriat; and to Somersham, in the county of Huntingdon, to Anthony Yewle. Afterwards, Henry Denne declared that the widow Wiggs, of Dunton, in the county of Bedford, that had forsaken the congregation, denying the faith, did now earnestly desire a reconciliation. Whereupon the congregation did order and appoint John Denne and John Weymor to go unto her, to hear her declarations; and, if they received satisfaction, to receive her again.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE.

On the 17th day of the third month, Edmond Mayle, Thomas Coxe, and Richard Elegood, according to former order and appointment, did go to Over, in the county of Cambridge, to the widow Binns, — Peppers, and — Sneesby; to whom we said, "You have been formerly admonished by messengers from the congregation (p. 40), but have not yet given satisfaction; wherefore, we are now sent by the church to know your minds, and how you stand affected to the ways of God: therefore, we desire you to deal plainly with us." Peppers answered, saying, "I love you, and so I do all people." We desired to know whether she was willing to walk in [the] ordinances and commandments of God, which formerly she did own and confess to be according to truth. She said, "I find no comfort in them, and to walk in them I should but show myself an hypocrite. I have received greater manifestations; for God dwelleth in me, and I in him. And

now I see that to love, to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry is enough." We told her, to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked was not enough: for if one should give all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and have no charity it is nothing. 1 Cor. xiii. 3. But herein you would show your love to God, if you keep his commandments: *for he that saith he loveth God and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.* John ii. 4. Therefore we desired her to consider what she had done, and told her we were confident she was deceived, in that she refused to be guided by the scriptures. And no marvel that she found no comfort, seeing she refused to walk where comfort was to be found. Then we desired again to know whether she would walk in those ordinances which formerly she did believe to be the command of Christ, and wherein she did confess that she found comfort formerly. She answered, "No; I cannot." After which words, and many more which are almost impossible to relate, we seeing that she refused to walk by that rule which Christ hath left with his church, we did excommunicate her.

The other two, viz., the widow Binns, and — Sneesby, declared their willingness to walk in the ordinances of God, and promised to come over to the congregation. Then we exhorted them to stedfastness in the ways of God. From thence we went to Bluntisham, in the county of Huntingdon, to Anne Marriot, to whom we said, "The congregation having formerly sent unto you (p. 30), reproving you for your wickedness, and you hardening your neck against reproof, they have now sent to you again, to reprove you for your heinous sins. She said, "You have not dealt with me according to order, for you should have told me of my fault in private." We replied and said, "You should have been cut off from the congregation at the first, for your wickedness in committing fornication; but the congregation sent unto you to admonish you of your evil, that you might take

notice of it and repent. But instead of repentance, you charge the congregation with their dealing with you contrary to order; and whereas you say that you should have been told of your sins privately, your sins were public, known to all that know you, both within and without. Yet we do not apprehend that you have utterly cast off yourself from the Lord, but upon repentance, you may be received again. But so far you have cast off yourself as to be cut off from the body of Christ, until you bring forth fruits meet for repentance. And, therefore, considering that you have fallen from the truth which formerly you received, and have committed many heinous crimes, as fornication, confederacy with a thief, and lastly hardened your neck against all the reproofs of the church, by virtue of the power which Christ hath given to his church, and the exhortation of the apostle, we do deliver you unto Satan.[3] 1 Cor. v. 5.

After which we went to Somersham, in the county of Huntingdon,to Anthony Yeule; to whom we declared the cause of our coming, viz., "We being sent by the congregation, it being now the third time that they had sent unto you, to know your mind concerning the ways of God, which formerly you have been obedient unto." He said, "For those ways which are written in the scriptures, they were for those men to practise who did write them; but we are to serve God in spirit." We said, that peace was promised to as many as walk according to that rule. Gal. vi. 16. He said, that rule was not the scriptures, but the Spirit. We replied and said,

[3] ["Now his casting forth, or delivering up to Satan, is the returning of his person into the kingdom from whence he came. We, while dead in sin, are in the kingdom of Satan; but being made to believe in Christ, are translated into his church, the kingdom of heaven. Now when any declare their hearts not to be right, but visibly to belong to the kingdom of Satan, they are to be sent forth from the church into their own kingdom, viz., this world, whose god Satan is." Gospel Glory proclaimed before the Sons of Men, &c. By Edward Draper, p. 154. edit. 1649.]

"The spirit must be tried whether it be of God or no, 1 John iv. 1, and that by the scriptures; and that spirit that speaks contrary to the scriptures, Isaiah viii. 20, is not a true spirit: and therefore we desire to know, how we may discern that you serve God in spirit, if the spirit must not be tried by the scriptures; and therefore we desire you to deal plainly with us, as we desire to do with you." He said, "If you will not believe me, I cannot make it more evident. God speaks unto me by his Spirit, and I am satisfied. He spake unto prophets formerly, and now he speaks unto me by his Spirit.[4] We answered and said, "That Spirit which speaks contrary to the word, is not a true spirit; but that spirit which you are led by, is contrary to the scriptures; therefore, it is not a true spirit. Wherefore we desire you to consider seriously what you do, and declare unto us, whether you are willing to follow that rule of the scripture which you have owned, and found comfort by." He answered and said, "I confess that the anabaptists do walk the nearest to the rule in the scriptures of any that I know; but for my part I will not be tied unto it." After which, taking into our serious consideration how that he hath forsaken the saints, denying to be guided by the holy scriptures, and despising and contemning the ordinances of God, and hardening his neck against the reproof and admonition of the church, we declared, that by the same power by which he was made a member of the church, we did now cut him off from the body, delivering him unto Satan.

EDMOND MAYLE.

[4] [Thus Fox complains that the professors of his day could "not bear to hear that any should come, whilst upon earth, into the same power and spirit that the prophets and apostles were in." Again, he says: "I saw that none could read John's words aright, and with a true understanding of them, but in and with the same divine Spirit by which John spake them." Journal, pp. 99, 100.]

On the three and twentieth day of the third month, John Rich of Yelling, in the county of Huntingdon, according to former order (p. 47), was certified of his excommunication.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE.

On the fifth day of the fourth month, at a general meeting held at Fenystanton, in the county of Huntingdon, Edmond Mayle declared their proceedings at Over, in the county of Cambridge, Bluntisham, and Somersham in the county of Huntingdon (p. 46). Afterwards, Henry Denne declared saying: "Brethren, according to your former order (p. 45), on the six and twentieth day of the third month, brother Gilman, bro. Disbrowe, and myself, did go to Aensbury [Eynsbury], in the county of Huntingdon, to William Marriatt and his wife; but to declare what they said, indeed I cannot, there were so many words used by them that were without sense, which we did not understand, nor I think themselves; which when we heard we sharply reproved them for their faults, declaring to them that they did not walk charitably, in that they put the church to so much trouble in sending to them so often. Then they said, "Truly, we have no zeal to come unto you; but when our zeal moveth us then we will come.' Now, since, they have come to the congregation; but I being then absent I must leave that for others to declare."

Then John Denne stood up and said, "Brethren, on the first day of the week last past, it being the nine and twentieth day of the third month, William Marriatt and his wife came unto us, we being assembled at Burne; to whom, after salutations, according to my duty I spake, reproving and admonishing them for absenting themselves from the congregation, and for slighting those things which formerly he believed to be true, viz., the ordinances of God. Then they said,

'We can willingly come and hear with you, but we cannot break bread with you.' I demanded of them the reason. At length, after many nonsensical words which none can understand, and which I cannot relate, they said, 'We have no right to it, because we have no faith in God. We cannot call God Father, nor come with any boldness into his presence.' Then I asked them whether they had not faith in and boldness before God, when they 'walked in the observation of the ordinances of God.' They answered, 'Yea.' Then I blamed them for declining, and exhorted them to return, showing them the promises in the scriptures. Then they said; 'When we walked with you we expected much, but were deceived in our expectations; therefore we went higher, but God hath brought us low, and it is good for us so to be.' Then I made it appear that it was not good to be in that condition, and therefore exhorted them to return. They said, 'If we thought you were the people of God we would come to you and meet with you, although we should remain in this condition.' I answered, that we could not prove ourselves to be the people of God any other way but by the scriptures, and by them we were able to prove it; and accordingly I did. But neither this, nor anything I said, would give them satisfaction, for they said they could not tell whether we were the people of God or no. And moreover the man said, 'I see no comfort in meetings, they are only to ripen the brain; for what I was, and how I was esteemed among you formerly, some of you here present know. But now I see that it was nothing but the ripeness of my brain, andthe quickness of my wit.'

"And at their departing he said, 'Well, although we should always remain in ignorance and without faith, or any knowledge of God, yet let us not be as strangers; but let us speak one to another, and have communion together.' But how this agreeth with the scripture, which saith, *what com-*

munion hath light with darkness, or *what part hath he that believeth with an infidel,* (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15,) I shall leave to your consideration."

Then the congregation taking these things into serious consideration, and withal taking notice of the scripture, did order and appoint Edmond Mayle, John Denne, and Thomas Coxe, to go unto them to admonish them, and if they remained in the same condition to proceed against them.

Then John Denne spake again, saying:—"Brethren, at the last meeting held at Caxton Pastures, the desires of the widow Wiggs, of Dunton, being presented unto you, you were pleased to appoint brother Weymor and myself to go unto her. And accordingly, on the one and twentieth day of the third month, I, taking bro. Disbrowe along with me, because bro. Weymor was not at leisure to go, did go unto her, and after some salutations I spake, saying:—"The cause of our coming is this—you having formerly forsaken the congregation, denying the faith, yet now desiring a reconciliation—the congregation have taken your desires into consideration, and have sent us unto you to know upon what grounds your desires are." She said that she never forsook the congregation, but we forsook her. I said it seemed something strange to me "that the congregation should be blamed for forsaking one person, and not that person blamed for forsaking the congregation; and this I am sure [of,] it was not we that made the separation, but you and those with you; for you began to reprove and proceeded, (as it was said) to excommunicate us." Then she confessed that those people with whom she walked did make the separation; but she said she did not approve of it. I told her that if it were so, she should have manifested her dislike according to the scriptures, which saith (2 Cor. vi. 17), *Come out from among them, and be you separate.* She said, if she had done so, we would not have received her; so that being

[if] we refused to have fellowship with her, she should not have had fellowship with any. I told her, that I was confident that if the congregation refused to have fellowship with her, it was because she denied the faith. She said, that if by the faith we meant the doctrine of Christ's dying for all men, she never believed it. I said, it seemed very strange to me that she should never believe it; and thereupon asked her who baptized her? She said, my father, viz., Henry Denne. Then I told her that I was confident she did believe it, or else my father would not have baptized her. She said again, she did not believe it. Then I asked her, whether my father received the confession of her faith without any ground from the scriptures? She said, "No." Then I asked her what ground in scripture she showed him. She said, "This, viz.: *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief,*" 1 Tim. i. 15. I told her this was a sufficient ground: for it proveth that Christ died for all, in that he died for the chiefest of sinners. She said, that she did not apprehend any such thing in the text. Then I said, I hardly believed it that she should be baptized, if she did not believe it. Thus after I had urged the business, she said, that she believed my father did think she had believed it when she was baptized, but she did not. Then after I had blamed her for not dealing sincerely, I asked her whether she believed it now? She said, she believed the death of Christ was sufficient for the salvation of all men. I proved by the scriptures that the death of Christ was not sufficient for the salvation of any; for although he died, yet if he had not risen our faith had been vain, we had been yet in our sins. 1 Cor. xv. 17. Then I showed her by the scriptures what Christ did by his death, and for whom he died. Some objections she brought against it; but when I had answered them, she confessed that it was clearer to her than ever it was before. Yet, notwithstanding, I told her we could not receive her; but I should declare her

words to the congregation. Then she desired me to pray for her, and to send her word what the congregation concluded concerning her. The truth of these things, bro. Disbrowe, that was with me, can witness." Then the congregation taking these words into serious consideration, did conclude that it was necessary she should come and speak before them; and accordingly did appoint brother Weymor to go unto her, to desire her to come over at the next general meeting, which was appointed to be on the third day of the fifth month at Caxton Pastures.

JOHN DENNE,
EDMOND MAYLE.

On the 9th day of the fourth month, Edmond Mayle, John Denne, and Thomas Coxe, according to former order and appointment (p. 52), did go to Aensbury, in the county of Huntingdon, to William Marriatt, and his wife, to whom we declared that the congregation taking into their serious consideration his former declarations, and finding them not to be satisfactory, have now sent us unto you to hear whether yet you are returned. They said, they could say no more than they said when they came to us at Burne (see p. 48); for they were yet in the same condition. Then many words passed between us, but they were the same which formerly they declared; viz., they were without faith. Whereupon, taking into our serious consideration how that they have long absented themselves from the congregation, and slighted the ordinances of God, and now they declared they are without faith; and, considering the scripture which saith, *What communion hath light with darkness, or he that believeth with an infidel?* 2 Cor. vi. 14, we did excommunicate them. Then the man said, "I cannot blame you, for if you should have had communion with us, it would have overthrown all by the roots."

JOHN DENNE.

On the third day of the fifth month, the widow Wiggs, of Dunton, in the county of Bedford, according to the former order (p. 52), did come unto us, we being assembled at Caxton Pastures. Whereupon John Denne declared to the congregation, that she was come to give unto them satisfaction. Then Henry Denne spake and said, "Brethren, I think I can best relate the business concerning the widow Wiggs, because I know it better than any; and thus it was:—The Widow Wiggs, with two other women (being all great with child, and convinced of the ordinance of baptism), did desire to submit to it; but the other two women deferred it, fearing lest it should cause them to miscarry. But the widow Wiggs, although she was some days—yea, if I be not mistaken, some weeks past her reckoning—was resolved to submit unto it, although it was in a frost. And, thereupon, I was sent for to Dunton; and, according to my duty I went, and receiving a good confession of her faith, with this ground of scripture, 1 Tim. i. 15, *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,* which you know she since confessed that she showed me, (see page 53). I received her, and baptized her. And truly if she did not believe it, as now she saith, but dissembled, I conceive it may be because her own sister a little time before propounded herself to be baptized, but was refused upon that very ground—viz., for not believing that Christ died for all men. For as I remember, there were present bro. Abbott, bro. Niblett, myself, and many others, and she declared very largely how she had been in great trouble a long time; but at length, she said, she heard a voice, saying, "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee;" and then she received very great comfort. I asked her how long her comfort held? She said, "About three weeks." I told her that I marvelled it held so long; for I told her that I did believe it to be a fancy. And therefore, although there was none against the receiving

of her but bro. Abbott and myself, she was put by until she should be better instructed; and about two days after she was received upon sufficient grounds. But indeed I rather think she did believe it, for it was generally believed by all the members of the church until the coming of Timothy Trevis from London, who I am confident did more harm than Hymenæus and Alexander, 1 Tim. i. 20, 2 Tim. ii. 17, whom the scripture mentions. Then she said again, that she did not believe it at that time, but now she was better satisfied." Then the congregation, notwithstanding her former dissimulation, being willing to make known all tenderness of love, did take into consideration her condition, that so they might see whether they might receive her. And thereupon it was propounded, whether she had true faith when she was baptized? It was answered and generally agreed unto, that although she did not believe that Christ died for all men, yet if she could find any promise so general as would include herself, that then her faith, being grounded upon that promise, was true faith. Then it was asked her, whether she could find any promise so general as she might safely receive for a ground of her faith? Many particular promises she instanced in; but none so general as would include herself. Wherefore it was generally concluded, that at the time of her baptism she had no true faith. Whereupon it was propounded whether the baptism was true, seeing she had no true faith. It was answered and generally concluded that it was true in the intention of the baptizer, but not true in the intention of the baptized; and therefore, seeing that [it] is not the intention of the baptizer, but the intention of the baptized that makes baptism to be true, it was no true baptism. She said that she knew her faith to be true, and her baptism to be true, and if we would receive her upon that ground, she would willingly join with us; but otherwise she must depart as she came. We told her that we could not

receive satisfaction without grounds; and therefore seeing she would not be otherwise minded, we could not have any fellowship or communion with her.[5]

Afterwards, John Denne stood up and said, "Brethren, I hearing of a general report concerning bro. Mitchell, who is now removed to Morden [Morden-Steeple, Cambridgeshire], that he should return to the church of England and frequent the alehouse, and that he should say that it repented him that ever he joined with the congregation—on the seven and twentieth day of the fourth month, having an opportunity, (taking bro. Gilman along with me), I went to him, and after salutations I told him what I had heard. He said, those things were all false. I said, that I did much rejoice to hear that they were not true. He said again, that they were not true. Then I told him that I had a great desire to speak with him ever since his departure, but abundantly the more since I heard of these things, for I was filled with a strong suspicion of the truth of them; and that partly, because his departure was so strange. But rather because, before his departure, he absented himself from the assembly of the saints. He replied and said, that truly he did not come to our meetings, but it was because he saw so many failings amongst us. I told him that if he saw so many failings amongst us, he should have followed the rule of the scriptures, which saith, *Thou shalt not hate thy brother, but shalt in any wise tell him of his faults.* He answered and said, "A brother; but who is that? The scripture saith, with an idolator, a railer, or

[5] ["The great truth, that Christ died for all mankind, or, as it was sometimes expressed, 'the doctrine of the universal love of God in Christ to all mankind,' was the distinguishing tenet from which the general baptists took their name, and for which they contended with the greatest ardour. It was prefixed to their church-covenants, inscribed in the title of their creeds, inserted in their trust deeds, and considered as the glory of the denomination." Taylor's Hist. of Gen. Bapt. i. 387.]

covetous person, do not eat; and, when you make a feast bid the halt, the blind, and maimed. Now these are brethren; but you do not so, for the covetous person is suffered amongst you, and you bid the rich but do not suffer the poor to eat." I desired him to tell us who he did accuse; but he would not instance in any person, but only said that these things were true. And, moreover, after many words, he told us plainly that we were not the people of God. Then I asked him, whether he did believe us to be the people of God when he was baptised? He answered, Yea, he did so; but now he saw that he was then deceived. Whereupon I reproved him for his faults, and exhorted him to return, largely by the scriptures, showing him the danger of departing from the ways of God; but he did not seem to take notice of anything. Now, brethren, seeing the accusation is in general against all the congregation, I thought good to declare it to you." Whereupon the congregation taking of it into their serious consideration, did order and appoint Henry Denne and John Gilman to go unto him, and to admonish him. Likewise the congregation taking into consideration the condition of John Eppings and his wife, who have been formerly admonished, but rejected the admonitions, (p. 30), did appoint Edmond Mayle and Christo. Marriatt to go unto them and to admonish them, and if they remained perverse to proceed according to order.

JOHN DENNE.

On the 19th day of the fifth month, at a meeting held at Papworth Everard, Hen. Denne stood up and said: "Brethren, at the last general meeting at Caxton, you were pleased to appoint bro. Gilman and myself to go to George Mitchell to admonish him of his faults. But we accidentally meeting with

him at Eltisley, on the 17th day of this present month, took then occasion to speak unto him, according to your command. But our admonitions and reproofs would take no place; for he replied that what he had said was true, and he said he would come and make it appear before the congregation. Then we desired him to appoint the time when he would come. He said he could not tell. Yet, afterwards, he promised to come that day six weeks, which will be on the eight and twentieth day of the sixth month at the farthest." Whereupon the congregation, being willing to manifest all patience towards him, resolved to wait till the expiration of that time, that so they might hear his answers.

Afterward, Edmond Mayle stood up and said: "Brethren according to your former order, on the 10th day of the fifth month, brother Marriatt and myself did go to Sutton, in the Isle of Ely, to John Eppings and his wife, to whom we began to speak, saying: "You have been formerly admonished by messengers from the congregation, but despised their admonitions (p. 33), therefore, they have now sent once more unto you by us, to see if you have repented of your evil which you have committed in forsaking the congregation, sprinkling your children, &c." They answered, that they believed they had not sinned in sprinkling their children. We replied, saying: "You have sinned greatly in doing that for which you have no rule in the scripture, and therefore it is an addition to the word of God." Then they said that they did believe that there were other people that do not walk in the way which we walk in, that are the people of God. We told them that we would not judge others; but we desired to know how we should know them to be the people of God. They answered that all people walked in the ways of God. Then we proved the contrary by the scriptures, and declared unto them how dangerous their condition is and from what they are fallen, and exhorted

them to return from whence they are fallen and repent. And, indeed, many arguments we used, but they would not move them to repentance. For they replied that they could do nothing but what God acted in them, and as for that way which we walk in, they said they found no love to it. Then, taking into our serious consideration,

First, How that they have forsaken the congregation.

Secondly, Joined themselves with the church of England.

Thirdly, Forsaken and despised the ordinances of God.

Fourthly, Sprinkled their children.

Fifthly, Affirmed that all persons walk in the way of God, and that God acts all actions in all men.[6]

Sixthly, And despised all the reproof and admonition of the church;—we did deliver them unto Satan, declaring that the church would have no communion with them.

On the 11th day of the seventh month, at a general meeting at Caxton Pastures, we read a letter from Westby, in the county of Lincoln, which was as followeth:—

To the beloved Brethren at Fenystanton, in Huntingdonshire; grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied.

Brethren,—After salutations in Christ Jesus sent unto you from the church of God at Westby in Lincolnshire, these are to request you, in all brotherly kindness and tender love, to send us a certificate of the commission which those messengers, John Lupton[7] and Joseph Wright had at their coming amongst

[6] [Edwards quotes from a writer of that day as saying, that God "is the author not of those actions alone in and with which sin is, but of the very pravity, ataxy, anomy, irregularity and sinfulness itself which is in them." Gangræna, Part i. p. 16.]

[7] [Mr. Lupton was pastor or messenger of a congregation meeting at Coningsby and Tattershall, in 1657. "In 166", as one of the heads of the congregation, he signed the third address of the Lincolnshire baptists to the king." "He was," says Taylor, "a pious man; and preserved the esteem of his brethren in the ministry to the last." He died in the year 1670. Taylor's Hist. of Gen. Bapt. i. pp. 139,193,205.]

you, and how they did demean themselves after your excepting against it, in blotting out, putting in, and altering thereof at their own pleasures. And, likewise, because we do hear this of you, brethren, that although you will not go amongst others, and sit down in communion with them that are disobedient to part of Christ's doctrine, nor mix yourselves in communion with such people at their assemblies that are against the fourth principle, viz., the laying on of hands on all baptized persons that do believe Christ's doctrine; yet, if such persons that have not obeyed come and offer themselves amongst you, and sit down with you in your own fellowship, you bear with them, and permit them so to do. Now, because we know that the hearing of this amongst others near us, doth not only strengthen them in their disobedience, but also exasperate and stir up the indignation of their spirits against those faithful brethren and churches that are (in this kind) unleavened, and dare not permit the least of this leaven for fear of leavening the whole lump; we do, therefore, heartily beseech you to send, and give us in, unto our serious considerations, the scripture grounds of your permission and toleration hereof, and practice herein, and we shall in all love and meekness take them into our meditations, so as to peruse them seriously, and answer them faithfully. And, further, if you shall be pleased in your voluntary disposition, for the promotion of unity and truth in the church of Christ, to transmit or send over amongst us some of the principal grounds of your faith, and practice for the breaking bread in remembrance, &c. at or after a feast or supper; it will be not only very acceptable service to God, but very thankfully received and accepted on amongst us, who are your beloved brethren and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; to whom be glory in the churches throughout all ages, and to whom we commend you all and to the word

of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified.

And rest your dearly beloved brethren in the Lord,

Subscribed by

THO. WILLIAMS, *Messr.*
JOHN ALLEINE, *Pastor,*
RIMMIDGE WORTLEY, *Deacon.*
JOH. BULLIMER,
WILL. BULLIMER,
JOH. IBIT.
ROBT. WRIGHT,
ROBT. COX.

From Westby, August 27, 1653.

This letter being seriously perused, it was ordered that a letter should be drawn up and sent to Westby in answer thereunto.

After which the congregation, taking into their serious consideration their duty in purging themselves from rotten members, did order and appoint Hen. Denne, John Gilman, and John Denne, or any two of them, to go unto Potton and Dunton, in the county of Bedford, to admonish those wicked members that have so long time despised the admonitions of the church; and if they should not repent, to proceed with them according to order.

Afterwards, the condition of George Michel being propounded, and the congregation taking into consideration his heinous crimes and great errors which he hath committed, in

First, Forsaking his principles.

Secondly, Charging the congregation with tolerating covetous persons amongst them, and for not suffering the poor to eat with them in their feasts, which things he was not able to prove.

Thirdly, Denying us to be the church of Christ.

Fourthly, Despising and contemning both the admonitions of particular persons, and of the whole church.

Fifthly, Breaking of his promise to the congregation, in not coming according to his former appointment (pp. 57, 58);— did order and appoint Hen. Denne, John Gilman, and James Disbrowe, to go unto him and to admonish him once more, and if he should despise the admonition to excommunicate him.

On the 20th day of the seventh month, we received a letter from Norborow, in the county of Lincoln, which was as followeth :—

To the church of God at Fenystanton:

Christian friends and brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ, called out of this present evil world, and sanctified through Jesus Christ, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, so that you may be fruitful and abounding in the knowledge of Jesus, and grow in grace continually.

We, the church of God in and about Langtoft and Thurlby, having amongst us sad divisions, by reason of some persons as we judge, walking contrary to the rule of Christ, and also contrary to what you have judged to be their duty, thought it good to acquaint you, to the end you might give in your best advice and assistance in this matter of so high concernment, and that which makes much either for or against the honour of God; that is to say, unity amongst brethren. And for the prevention of all misinformation which either you have had, or otherwise may have, we have here sent you a true relation of the first beginning of our distractions, and how we have proceeded, and what we do intend further, by the assistance of God; which relation take as followeth :—

After that brother Robt. Wright was under that practice of imposition of hands, we expected some trouble amongst us; which accordingly we met with. For no sooner was he under that practice, but he denied that he was our pastor, notwith-

standing that he was so chosen by the church, and did own himself and was owned by the church as pastor, and had acted as pastor half a year; which moved us, brother Oates being in the country,[8] to invite him amongst us, who came accordingly. And being come, at a general meeting of our friends, the church was willing to set him free from his pastor's place. And having at that time a conference about the whole business of laying on of hands, he having said what he could in the behalf of it was so fully answered that, although he was under it he confessed it was dubious. Yet he desired he might have his liberty in it, which was granted him by the church. And, likewise, he promised and engaged to give the church their liberty, and walk with them as a member, and would rather disown the practisers of laying on of hands than disown us, although we do not own that practice; and so walked with the church as a member about the space of half a year, and was one that assisted the church in the work of teaching amongst us, and one that helped to make up the differences that at any time rose up amongst us, and was one that assisted the church in admitting of members and casting out; and likewise was one that engaged [in] the public dispute with the priests at Castor, and did give in his consent with the church to send for brother Denne to that meeting; and was one that met at Helpston when brother Denne came to assist us in the putting ourselves into order. But being met that day, before brother Denne came, some of the members asking his advice in the way of

[8] [Mr. Samuel Oates was a member of Mr. Lamb's church meeting in Bell Alley, London. He was much engaged at different times in preaching and baptizing in various parts of the country. His proceedings greatly excited the wrath of the Presbyterians, and brought upon him persecution and imprisonment. After the restoration he is said to have conformed for a short time, and to have been inducted into the living of Hastings. He, however, shortly returned to his membership with Mr. Lamb's church, in the communion of which he died about the year 1666. Crosby i. 236; iii. 60, 61. Brook's Lives of the Puritans, iii. 427. Edward's Gangræna, i. 106; ii. 13,8,21.]

order, he answered he would neither make nor meddle with them, neither to choose nor to be chosen, but began to charge the church of being partial and tolerators of drunkards and back biters. But being desired the grounds of his so charging the church, he answered that one of the members said he was a base man, but the party whom he so charged, being asked the question, denied that ever he said so. But Peterboro' friends, some of them hearing this, were very much troubled, which put us upon the clearing of ourselves; but the church not being put into order that day for want of time, appointed another day, and desired bro. Coale and bro. Spence to meet with them, and accordingly they did. Bro. Robert Wright and bro. Coxe were there also, and did give their vote for some that were chosen that day, but for others were silent; and after the church was put into order they took into examination the two parties, the one that said brother Wright was called "base man," and the other which said he did not; but being brought face to face the party that did affirm the thing was bro. Wright's wife, who had nobody to stand by her in that affirmation, although there were present four friends when she saith the word was spoken, but did all affirm the contrary. She then being minded of her sin and of the rule of Christ, desiring her to consider of it we left her at that time, and further proceeded in calling bro. Wirght to an account for his charge, as afore, desiring him either to prove it or to acknowledge his evil. But he made little answer, only promised to draw up his charge in writing speedily; but he, delaying of his promise on the one side, and Peterborough friends being much grieved on the other, did move us to call upon him for to bring it in several times. At length a day was appointed, and we, not looking upon ourselves to be fit judges in our own cause, did refer the business to friends of other societies, and such as he judged to be faithful, to be examiners and judges in the business. And in all his charges the

church was cleared, and he found guilty; yet, notwithstanding, he said that he was conscious to himself that some of those things were true, and would not at that time acknowledge his evil. So the church was willing still to wait upon him, and would not proceed against him then; but the church proceeded in admonishing of his wife, but she still slighted their admonition. Whereupon the church appointed a general meeting, and called into their assistance some friends from three other societies, namely, Burly, Peterborough, and Surfleet, to deal with them both. And, first, taking her business into consideration, a full relation of it being given, she being then admonished and it taking no place, but she being further enraged, the church with one consent proceeded to excommunication; and further resolved that, if bro. Rob. Wright did not by the next first day either prove his charge or acknowledge his evil, then to be proceeded against. But upon that day bro. Wright did, before the church, acknowledge his evil, and once again promised to live in unity and peace with the church; but no sooner reconciled but he separates himself from us, and appoints other meetings contrary to the order of the church. The church sending to him to know the grounds of his separation from them, he said because they had done unjust actions; and therefore he would have no communion with them. Again the church sent other messengers to his place of meeting, to know not only his, but also the others' grounds of separation; and they with him gave this answer: Because we do not practise imposition of hands upon every member, washing of feet, and keeping a supper before breaking bread; and upon these accounts he has separated from us, and saith that we are no church of Christ: charging some of us to be drunkards, ambitious, lordly, &c.; and saith what his ears hear, his tongue shall speak, but will not be brought to the proving any of these things. Besides, he hath since joined himself unto, and admitted some disordered persons who

lie under the reproof of the church, and one that the church hath lately excommunicated; which caused the church to send to them again, to summon them in to give an account of this disorder; but they still refusing, it did move the church to call a general meeting, and we seriously weighing and considering the matter, we found bro. Rob. Wright guilty of these sins, as followeth, viz.:—

First, In that he hath separated himself from us, contrary to that spoken of in the Hebrews.

Secondly, In denying us to be the church of Christ, contrary to his former declarations.

Thirdly, In charging of us with unjust actions, not being able to prove it against us, as we are the church.

Fourthly, In scandalizing of us with being drunkards, ambitious, lordly, &c.

Fifthly, In admitting of disordered and excommunicated persons, so justifying the wicked, which is an abomination to the Lord.

And for these things we have sent out from us messengers to admonish him twice; but he doth refuse to hear us, so that our resolutions are to proceed against him according to the rule of Christ: for we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. And now this only we desire of you, seriously to consider what we have here inserted, and if in any thing you perceive us to derogate from the rule, that you would be pleased to give in your best assistance, and inform us where we do mistake; or if you can conceive what more may be done to the making a reconciliation, that you would not be any ways wanting: because, blessed are the peace-makers. And truly, dear brethren, one great reason why we do write these lines unto you is, because you being a people under the practice of those things which he seems to make a ground of his separation;—as imposition of hands, washing of feet, keeping of a supper before breaking of

bread,—that you may clearly see it is not for the practising of these things that we do deal with him, but for sin. And so we commit you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified; so we rest and remain yours in the faith and order of the gospel.

Subscribed by us in the behalf of the church,

WILL. LANE, JOH. BISSELL, FRAN. WRIGHT,
JOH. CATTELL, JOH. WHALPOULE, ROBT. DYER,
JONAS JOHNSON, EDM. CLAXTON, RICH. WALE.
ROBT. WOORKES, JOH. MEASURE,

Norborough, Sept. 18th, 1653.

On the five and twentieth day of the seventh month, there was a letter, according to former order, drawn up, approved by the congregation, and sent in answer to that which we read from Westby (p. 60), which was as followeth:—

The brethren in the counties of Huntingdon and Cambridge, to the faithful in Christ Jesus at Westby, in the county of Lincoln, with grace, mercy, and peace from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved brethren, We give thanks unto God, who, according to the riches of his mercy and abundant glory of his grace, manifested in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath shed abroad the love of God in your hearts, teaching you to love the brethren, and to receive the truth in the love of it. Now, as touching your request, we think it meet in the bowels of the fellowship of the saints, to satisfy your holy desires. Of the two messengers mentioned by you, only Joseph Wright came to us, who showed his commission; wherein were inserted these words: "We give them power and authority to call in question all persons, and to judge and determine of all matters." So as they can remember

that did read them, for none did take a copy of them. Which words being excepted against at Caxton, Joseph Wright was seen in that place to blot something out of the commission, and to insert something else. And when he came from Caxton to Fenystanton, those words which before had been excepted against were not in the commission, but some other thing interlined; but the particulars are not remembered by our brethren.

Concerning your second demand, why we do admit into fellowship those who are disobedient to part of Christ's doctrine, viz., the laying on of hands on all baptized believers:—

Answer.—Because we judge them faithful in the Lord, although ignorant in that particular; and it is written, *Him that is weak in the faith, receive.* And we read that Apollos was fervent in the Spirit, instructed in the way of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. Such we desire to take into our bosom, and with all meekness and patience to instruct them more perfectly in the way of the Lord, rather than to reject them, which we do not see any warrant for to do.

Dear brethren, We are not ignorant of the wiles of Satan, who seeketh by all means to make divisions and separations in the church of Christ, that so he may hinder the building of the Lord.

Unto your third request, to know our ground of breaking of bread after supper; we do judge it a safe and blameless way to follow a practice so often recorded in the scriptures, that Christ did institute it after supper; and it appears that the Corinthians did so practise; and that they are not blamed for supping, but for their disorder in supping. And sure we have more to say for ourselves than if it should be demanded of us, why we should receive it before supper. Yet, dear brethren, we do not judge the churches of Christ, neither do we lay it upon the churches as a command from

the Lord, neither any further binding than an example in this kind may be binding. And for a feast of love in the church of God, if the scripture had not spoken at all of it, (which yet it doth often,) yet we find it very necessary, the brethren coming from far, that the congregation should be refreshed before it be dismissed.[9] Holy brethren, if in anything we have offended we shall be ready to correct ourselves, when it shall appear to us that we walk in any thing contrary to that anointing which dwelleth in you and in all the saints, leading you into all truth.

We besecch you, brethren, pray for us, that we may labour together in the unity of the faith; that we may be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus; that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The brethren with us salute you all.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

Your brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ,

JOHN DENNE.

From Caxton, the 25th day of
the seventh month, 1653.

After which, the letter which we received from Norborough was taken into consideration, and being seriously perused, Edm. Mayle and John Denne were appointed

[9] [It is curious to observe how calumnies arise. It was from this practice that D'Assigny puts in his lists of the various anabaptist parties:—"Seventhly, *Legs of Mutton Baptists*, so named, because at the celebration of the Lord's supper, as they pretend, they sit down at table, and feast themselves with legs of mutton and other meats, at the time of breaking the bread, and distributing the wine." He adds, however, "I can hear but of one congregation of them, in Lambert Street, near Whitechapel." This was in 1709. Mystery of Anabaptism Unmasked, by Marius D'Assigny, B.D., p. 227, London, 8vo.]

to go over unto them; who, coming thither, blessed be God, procured a happy reconciliation between the congregation and the two parties, viz., brother Robert Wright and his wife.

JOHN DENNE.

According to former order (p. 63), Hen. Denne, John Gilman, and James Disbrowe, intended to go to George Michel, of Morden; but through the providence of God their intentions were frustrated. For on the 16th day of the eighth month, George Michel came unto the congregation, they being assembled at Caxton Pastures, and confessed his faults in every thing whereof he was accused, and professed his reconciliation. Whereupon the congregation, considering the words of Christ, Luke xvii. 4, did willingly and joyfully receive him.

JOHN DENNE.

On the three and twentieth day of the eighth month, at a general meeting at Fenystanton, Hen. Denne began to speak, saying: "Brethren, I desire you to consider the word of Christ, saying, *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,* Matt. xxviii. 19; which last words are often used by us, yet I think not too often. But I desire that we may seriously consider the former, viz., *Go, teach all nations, baptizing them,* &c., [or], as Mark saith, *Go, preach the gospel to every creature*, and so, whether we are not as much bound to observe them as any. And if it appeareth that we are, then I pray consider whether we are not in a great fault, in being so negligent in sending forth persons to divulge the gospel, in those many places that are ignorant thereof. Truly I conceive that we

are much to blame, and especially seeing there [are] many towns hereabouts that have no teachers; and who can tell but that the Lord may work in this opportunity." Then the congregation, taking these things into consideration, acknowledged that they were in an evil, and resolved to amend; and, accordingly, did appoint a meeting on the eight and twentieth day of this present month, at Papworth Everard, to confess our faults and humble ourselves before our God, that we might find mercy according to his promise, saying, If ye would judge yourselves you should not be judged by the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 31.

Afterward, the condition of James Disbrowe, a deacon, was declared, viz., that he having removed his habitation, and thereby being far distant from us, is not able to supply the office of a deacon, wherefore he desired a discharge. Whereupon the congregation ordered him to give up his accounts and to pay in the money that he had in his hands, which when he had done, the congregation, considering the ground of his desires, were pleased to dismiss him.

JOHN DENNE.

The eight and twentieth day of the eighth month, according to former order, a fast was observed, with prayer to Almighty God for wisdom and discretion; after which Hen. Denne was chosen and ordained by the laying on of hands, a messenger to divulge the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And John Gilman was chosen; and, by the laying on of hands, ordained a deacon.[1]

[1] [The right of the people "is restored and maintained in the baptized churches, where none are elected messengers, bishops, or deacons, without the free choice of the brotherhood where such elections are made. And after such election of persons of known integrity and competent ability, we proceed to ordination, with fasting and prayer, and the laying on of hands, according to the scripture. Acts xiii. 3; xiv.

The 3rd day of the ninth month, Hen. Denne, being accompanied with Christopher Marriat, went forth by the appointment of the congregation, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

On the 20th day of the ninth month, Hen. Denne and Christopher Marriat being returned, gave in a relation to the congregation of their proceedings, which was as followeth:

"The 3rd day of the ninth month we departed from Eltisley, and came the same day to the house of Robert Kent, at Kingston;[2] where first of all we conferred with the wife of the said Robert, who at the first did affirm that she did the will of God in all things, yet afterward did contradict this in her discourse. She likewise affirmed, that he that had Christ had all his ordinances; that the scriptures were not the ground of her faith, but an inward principle whereby she was led.

That she never received anything from the teaching of any man that did stick by her.

That the command to be baptized, was no command to her, because she was not called forth to obedience by an inward principle.

It was then demanded of her, by way of objection, whether to love and obey her husband were not a command, although she should want an inward principle to move her to it? To which she made no pertinent answer, but spake many things which savoured of Rantism, but yet she did much exclaim against their practice.

Robert Kent did labour to prove that ordinances were ceased, because there is a promise that they should cease, when

23; vi. 5, 6. All which apostolical practices are religiously observed in the baptized churches, without any devised adjuncts or ceremonies of our own or others." Grantham, Christ. Prim. Book ii. Part ii. Chap. 9. p. 131.]

[2] [Three miles and a half from Caxton.]

higher manifestations should come in place. It was then demanded of him whether he had higher manifestations than the apostles had. He answered, "Yea."

The wife of Rob. Kent affirmed that Christ had fulfilled all righteousness, and therefore no righteousness remained for us to fulfil.

It was then demanded of her, whether it was not a work of righteousness to love her husband, and to give alms.

A maid named Isabel said, that the Spirit assured her she had Christ. It was demanded how she knew it to be a true spirit? She answered, By the effects and not by the scriptures; for she tried the Scriptures by the Spirit, and not the Spirit by the Scriptures. It was told her, that the scriptures had such demonstrations as were of power to minister the spirit of discerning.

Robert Kent said, that he could hear any man preach, for he could pick the best and leave the worst. It was replied, Suppose there was a cup of poison set upon the table, and many men sitting by; and one of them knowing of it to be so, if another that did not know it should take the cup and drink, whether was it not an evil in him that knew it to suffer the other to drink it?[3]

[3] [It is evident that it is the same class of religionists that Bunyan speaks of in his first work in 1656, "Some Gospel Truths Opened." There were some, he says, whom the devil persuaded "that salvation was not fully and completely wrought out for poor sinners by the man Christ Jesus," though he died on the cross, without Jerusalem. Others he induced to "follow the light that they brought into the world with them; telling them, that light will lead them to the kingdom." He also "pretends to lead them up into some higher light, mysteries, and revelations of the Spirit, persuading them that they shall be as God himself, able to discern between good and evil." "Ask them for a scripture that doth positively prove their doctrine, they also have a scripture, but it is within, it doth bear witness within." —Bunyan's Works, ii. 133, 135. Offor's edit.]

Having staid all night at Kingston, we departed on the 4th day of the month.

On the 4th day of the month we departed from Kingston and came to Toft, where we went into the house of Paul Wayts, where we found him and his wife, who seemed to continue zealous and to be affected with their sense of the want of the things of God; from whom, after a short exhortation, we departed unto the house of —— Peck, in the same town. We found his wife at home, who seemed to question all truth, and to doubt whether there was ever such a person as the Virgin Mary, or Jesus Christ born at Bethlehem; and being urged with the scriptures, she said she knew it was truth according to the history but not according to the mystery.[4] She added, moreover, that Christ needed not to die, seeing God was reconciled, as appeared by the gift of his Son. It was replied, that Christ came that the grace of God might be continued in justice, and that Christ delivered us from wrath to come; unto which she answered nothing. Then after a short exhortation to be sober-minded and zealous, we departed.

And the same day we came to Haslingfield,[5] where we visited our brother and sister Barfurd. Our sister wept for joy to see us; and when we had prayed with them, and comforted them, we departed, and came that night to Hawson, where we lodged at bro. Raymond's house. And the brethren that night met together with us; we prayed with them, and spake unto them, and the next morning we departed.

On the 5th day of the month we departed from Hawson, and came to Cambridge. We went to bro, Hinde's, and

[4] [The piece of Bunyan's already referred to, was written expressly to meet this delusion. "Here thou mayest see," says Mr. Burton, his pastor, "by the Spirit, how Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Mary, is both true God and true man." Bunyan's Works, ii. 139.]

[5] [In Cambridgeshire, about five miles from Cambridge.]

at the first we made known unto him and the rest of the brethren the intent of our coming, which they hearing did labour to provide us a place in public, which was obtained. And on the first day of the week, it being the sixth day of the month, bro. Denne preached the doctrine of baptism, proving that believers ought to be baptized; that infants ought not to be baptized; and that ordinances were not ceased. The concourse of people that were present, were all silent in the public place. Some followed us into our brother's house, and confessed that it was the truth which was preached; unto whom it was said, Why do ye not then obey it? They answered, we desire to hear further, and to consider it further.

On the 7th day of the month, tidings were brought that some were discontented, and threatened that the public place should not be opened to us the next first day. This day we departed from brother Hinde's house, promising, if the Lord should permit, to return before the next first day. This day we took with us brother Harlow, and we did go unto John Love and his wife, to admonish them of their fault in forsaking the assembly of the people of God. The woman answered, That where they were, they were, and where we were, we were; as for them they had higher manifestations of God, and higher enjoyments than when they walked in fellowship; and that they did not forsake the people of God, for God's people were not all of one sort. We desired her to declare unto us what those manifestions were. She answered, she was not willing to declare or give an account of them. We asked her husband what he said to these matters. He answered, he was of the same mind with his wife. We desired him to repeat it. He answered that it was needless; he was of the same mind with his wife. Then we declared to them that we would return their answer to the congregation, desiring of them we might have it

in writing, which they refused. When we departed the wife of Love said, "We care not; I am sure you cannot excommunicate us from the Almighty."

From thence we departed to find out sister Odell, to admonish her of her disorder in forsaking the assembly; but we found her not.

Then we departed the town, brother Harlow accompanying us part of the way, whom when we had sent back we went to Shelford, to the house of Francis Holmes, whose wife was lately baptized, who rejoiced much to see us. And her husband gathered together the inhabitants, and we spake unto them the same things that were spoken at Cambridge. The people seemed very well affected to that which was spoken, although it had not been heard in the like manner before, and one woman openly professed that we had spoken the truth, and not one contradicted.

On the 8th day of the month we departed from Shelford, and went to Littlebury, in Essex, to seek out brother Ives, and to require satisfaction of him concerning his preaching at that place; but we found him not at home, and we had purposed to have lodged there that night, but we could not find entertainment there. Then we advised whether we should leave our mind in writing, and seal it up; but it was thought not orderly so to do, in regard we could not be assured that it should not be broken open.

The same night we went to Newport, in Essex, intending to inquire after the state of those persons who formerly had walked in the fellowship of the gospel; where we entered into the house of Fordam, a tanner, unto whom we declared the end of our coming, to inquire after the people and to know their state. He told us we were welcome, desired us to sit down, and commanded meat to be set before us; and when we had eaten he began to declare himself in this manner: "God in the beginning made man of the dust of the earth, and called

him Adam, and then breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Now, what was that breath of life? it was nothing but God himself, so that the soul and spirit of man is God." This, when we had denied, he proceeded: "All that proceeded from God is God, but the soul and spirit of man proceeded from God." We denied the first proposition, and desired him to prove that all that proceeded from God is God; which he could not prove, but uttered many words without sense to that purpose. He did labour to prove that all was God, by that place where it is said: *It is not you but the Spirit of my Father that speaketh in you.* "There are," said he, "but two things, flesh, or earth, and spirit." We told him that place did confute him where it was said, "Not you," but "the Spirit;" where there are two things mentioned, "you" and the "Spirit. "You" implies something which is not God; he answered; "You" is nothing but flesh and earth. We answered, flesh and earth were something, and yet he confessed that they were not God; therefore there was something which was not God. He said, Earth was nothing; we desired him to prove that earth was nothing.

He then proceeded in a large discourse to prove that the earth was upholden by God, but could not prove it to be nothing.

He did also affirm that God was darkness unto some men, without any proof; and that Christ was all in all, and therefore there was nothing but Christ. Unto which we answered that the apostle spoke of prerogatives, making us accepted before God; that the Jew had no greater prerogative, nor the Greek any want of such prerogative; but that in this sense Christ was all—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

He affirmed also that men were carried on to sin by the power of God, which being required to prove, he demanded by what power they sinned, if not by the power of God. We

answered that sin proceeded from weakness, and that it was a neglect of power. He then was asked whether he did believe that murder, adultery, theft, were sins. He answered, Yea; according to law men were judged sinners, offenders, and condemned and punished; but he added that, when men were judged according to men in the flesh, they did live according to God in the Spirit. Then we demanded, Whether in murder and adultery men do live according to God in the Spirit?

He answered, he would say nothing to it.

We further demanded, whether he would say they do not live according to God in the Spirit?

He said he would say nothing to it.

We demanded of him, whether or no it were a sin if a man should steal his horse?

He answered, If he should, believing that he had right unto him equal with him, it was no sin; but if he did not believe that he had right unto him, then it was a sin.

We desired him to declare what he thought of the ordinances of Christ, of prayer, &c.

He said, They did not use to pray together.

We asked him what he thought of that command, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together?

He said, They did assemble together in the Spirit, although they were absent in the flesh.

After this discourse, and many other things uttered by him without sense, we did go aside, and consulted together whether it were safe for us to abide in the house all night, though it were late, and we were both pressed in spirit to depart.

We then came to him again, and told him, that forasmuch as we did perceive he had forsaken the faith, and followed delusions, we could not but judge that God was not in that place, and therefore we were resolved to depart. He desired

us not to be angry: if we would stay we should be welcome. We answered, we were not angry, but grieved much to hear such things from him. And so we departed, and went up and down the town to find a lodging in the night, which at last God provided for us.[6]

We cannot perceive but that all fear of God, for aught we can hear, is extinct in that place.

On the 9th day of the month, we departed from Newport in the morning, and came to Royston, where we lodged at brother Gatward's house. And the next day, being the 10th day of the month, the brethren assembled at sister Glinister's house, where bro. Denne spake unto them the word of the Lord. And we continued in conference with them, many coming from Thaxfield and other places, until it was late in the night. After we had prayed, the brethren departed, and we lodged there that night.

On the 11th day of the month we departed from Royston, andcame to Melbourne, and there entered brother Creswell's house. And the brethren came together that night, and after a word of exhortation they departed, and we lodged there that night. And on the morrow, being the 12th day of the month, we departed and came for Cambridge: where we lodged again at brother Hind's that night, intending to have spoken in public the next day: but we were resisted by such as opposed the truth. The brethren met in private

[6] [George Fox, the quaker, thus relates an encounter with some of this party in prison at Coventry. "Seeing, they said they were God, I asked them if they knew whether it would rain to-morrow; they said they could not tell. Again, I asked them if they thought they should be always in that condition, or should change; and they answered, they could not tell. Then, said I unto them, God can tell, and God doth not change. You say you are God, and yet you cannot tell whether you shall change or no. So they were confounded, and quite brought down for that time. Then after I had reproved them for their blasphemous expressions, I went away; for I perceived they were Ranters, and I had met with none before." Journal i. 110. See also Edward's Gangræna, i. pp. 17, 100]

at brother Hinde's house, and after exercise and prayer, the brethren of Hawson did earnestly desire, in the name of many people of Shelford and Hawson, that brother Denne might come over to them the next first day, which was condescended unto.

On the 14th day of the month we departed homeward, and within two miles of Eltisley we parted one from another, to go to our several houses.

On the 27th day of the ninth month, Hen. Denne declared the proceedings at Hawson, as followeth:—

Brethren,—Concerning the success that the Lord gave to brother Marriatt and myself, it hath been already given in in writing, and therefore I shall say nothing of it; but at the latter end of that relation there was mention of a promise that I should go to Hawson the next first day, and accordingly on the nineteenth day of this present month I went thither; and on the next day, it being the first day of the week, the priest and the chiefest men of the town sent to me to come and preach in their public place. Whereupon I went, intending to have spoken there unto the people; but as soon as I began to speak, the rude multitude gathered together, and would not suffer me to speak; they being suborned by those which sent to me to preach, as it did most evidently appear afterwards, and that as well by the confession of some of those rude persons as by other demonstrations. Whereupon I departed from them, and spake in a private house. Many people came unto us, and those which were our great enemies (yet so rational that they abhorred such dissimulation as appeared in those forementioned persons) came and heard, and indeed many of them seemed greatly to be affected with that which was spoken.

Afterwards I was desired to go to Great Shelford the next

day, and accordingly I did; but Satan having stirred up the priest, a Justice of the peace, and several others against us, thereby hindered many from coming to us; yea, many of those which sent for me durst not come to us, only they sent their servants and children. The people seemed generally to be affected with the truth, and two of them, viz., Francis Holmes, and Mary Green, went along with me to Hawson the next night, it being the two and twentieth day of the month, and were baptized.

Also one —— King propounded himself to be baptized; but he desired liberty to hear the priests of England as often as he should think fit. I demanded of him, whether he thought they were the ministers of Christ, or of anti-Christ. for if they were the ministers of Christ, why, then, would he separate from them? but if they were the ministers of anti-Christ, why would he join with them? He then confessed that they were the ministers of anti-Christ; but he said, that they preached many good doctrines. I replied, the devil did so, as when he said that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Then, after many words, he said that he hired a farm of Mr. Bendich, and if he should know that he was baptized he would turn him out. I told him that the earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and wished him to trust God, and he would be a better landlord than Mr Bendich. Then he said he would consider of it, and so departed.

On the fourth day of the tenth month, at a general meeting held at Caxton Pastures, the congregation taking into their serious consideration the condition of many persons, John Denne declared the condition of Mary Whittock, saying:— "Brethren,—Here is our sister Whittock, who is destitute of harbour, and her mother being very sick, and her children small, and the ways dirty, she is not able to travel from place to place as she hath been accustomed; therefore I desire

that we may take her condition into consideration, and use the utmost of our endeavour to provide her harbour for this winter time. I hope none will be against it, knowing that he which hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and whatsoever he giveth, it shall be repaid. She was at Royston, but the town would not suffer her there to abide. Therefore, on the thirtieth day of the ninth month, my father and bro. Gilman brought her in their cart from thence, since which time I have given her harbour. But, indeed, this place is not convenient for her, because she cannot go any whither, either for her own relief, or her children's." Then Hen. Denne declared that she was at Melbourne, and the townsmen forced her to depart; and that from thence she went to Royston, and the town would not suffer her to continue there. Then it was objected that it would be the same here. It was answered, that for the preventing of it we must give security to the town that she shall not be chargeable to them, which was consented unto. And thereupon the congregation, being willing to manifest their love towards her, and their care of her, did appoint Edmond Mayle, Tho. Phillips, and Robt. Cole, to use the utmost of their endeavours for the providing a house for her.

Afterwards, Hen. Denne spake, saying: "Brethren, it came into our minds from something that was spoken on the first day of the last week from those words, 'Contend earnestly for the faith;' and from the consideration of the armour of God, part of which is the preparation of the gospel of peace, that it would be good and profitable for the strengthening of the weak, and for the edification of the whole body, if that the great differences about religion were all drawn up, and that all things that are brought either on the one side or on the other out of the scriptures were set down under that controversy, and a copy thereof delivered to every part of the congregation; that so every member may become acquainted with the ob-

jections of our adversaries, that thereby they may be able to answer; and this thing coming then into our minds, it was agreed that it should be propounded this day unto your consideration, which I have now done." Then the congregation seriously weighing the thing, and considering that it would be very profitable for the acquainting the saints with the objections of our adversaries, that so they may not come upon us unawares, and for acquainting the saints with the scriptures, that so our spiritual weapons may be always ready against our adversaries, did conclude that it should be done; and thereupon the greatest controversies were nominated, which were as followeth:

First, Whether Christ died for all men, or only for some particular persons?

Secondly, Whether baptism belongeth to believers or to infants?

Thirdly, Whether God be the author of sins?

Fourthly, Whether the ordinances of God, as prayer, exhortation, baptism, breaking of bread, &c. are ceased, or do yet continue?

Fifthly, Whether there be a possibility for believers to fall away? and referred to several persons, viz. the first to Hen. Denne; the second to John Denne; the third to Edmond Mayle; the fourth to Richard Ellegood; the fifth to John Blowes; that they might draw up all that is said on either side and present it to the congregation.

After this, John Denne spake, saying: "Brethren, I considering lately the records of the congregation, I found that when those people at Over, in the county of Cambridge, were admonished by messengers from the congregation (p. 41), the widow Binns, being one of them, was demanded why she joined with the church of England in their public worship? Her answer was that Mr. Pope was a great friend of hers, and she did it to please him. Now for this she never gave satisfaction,

which I conceive she ought to do, if you do apprehend it to be a sin." Then, upon consideration, it was concluded to be a very heinous sin; and, thereupon, Edm. Mayle, Tho. Coxe, and Rich. Ellegood were appointed to go unto her and to reprove and admonish her, and if she doth not repent, to proceed according to the rules of scripture.

On the 15th day of the eleventh month, at a general meeting held at Fenstanton, Edmond Mayle, Tho. Coxe, and Rich. Ellegood declared that, according to the former order of the congregation, they had been with the widow Binns, of Over, and that now she was with the assembly to speak for herself. Whereupon it was declared to her that the congregation did conceive that she had sinned very heinously in joining with the church of England. She said she did not join with them. We told her she went to their assemblies, and therein she joined with them. She confessed that she went to their assemblies, but she did it to please the world, to please Mr. Pope, and to try the spirits. It was replied that she had tried the spirits before, and therefore we did believe the greatest reason to be, that she might please Mr. Pope and the world, which we did apprehend to be an abominable sin, according as it is written: "Who art thou that fearest man, and forgettest the Lord thy maker?" and, therefore, she was sharply reproved by the congregation and exhorted to repent. Then she alleged that she was forced so to do for the maintaining of herself and children. We replied that that was not the way to be maintained, but if it were, she ought not to have used it; for shall we do evil that good may come of it? God forbid. Then after many other words she confessed that she had done evil, and said that she was very sorry for it. Whereupon the congregation did willingly accept thereof and did receive her; and to manifest their love gave unto her seven shillings to satisfy her necessities.

Afterwards, the condition of our sister Whittock was taken into consideration; and we, taking notice thereof, upon diligent search found that the best way for the satisfying her necessities, was to provide her a stock to trade withal, as formerly she was accustomed; and thereupon [we] gave unto her twenty shillings, and concluded that a letter should be sent to Melbourne and Royston, to desire them to do something for her.

After which, brother Tiffins and his wife's absenting themselves from the congregation was taken into consideration; and after some debate, it being concluded to be contrary to the will of God, Tho. Phillips and Christopher Marriatt were appointed to go unto them, to reprove and admonish them.

On the 26th day of the twelfth month, at a general meeting held at Caxton Pastures, these ensuing things were declared and taken into consideration:

First, John Denne stood up and said: "Brethren, according to your former order (p. 62), brother Gilman and myself, on the eighteenth day of this present month, went to Potton, in the county of Bedford, to reprove those persons that have forsaken the congregation and denied the faith. Where, first, after we perceived we could not get them together, we went to John Langhorne, and after some salutations we spake unto him, saying: "The cause of our coming at this time is this; the congregation, taking into their serious consideration how that many persons who formerly joined with us are now turned back, denying the faith, despising the ordinances of God, and followed after vanity, have resolved, according to their duty, to reprove and admonish all such persons, and if they do not repent, to proceed according to the will of God in separating them from the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, accordingly, we two were appointed (p. 62) to come unto you, to reprove you for your heinous faults, viz. for denying

the faith, and despising the ordinances of God, &c. He said he had been reproved already. We told him it was true he had been so, yet that we might fulfil the will of God we do it again; and withal did earnestly desire him to consider from whence he was fallen and repent. Then he could not believe that Christ died for all. We answered and told him that he did once believe it; but now he said he was better enlightened; and, moreover, he said he was gone beyond those low ordinances which we practise. "For a man," he said, "must not always dwell upon one thing." Then we laboured to prove by the scriptures that the ordinances of God were not low. He confessed that it was true by the letter; but it was the spiritual meaning he said that we must look to; and therefore he said he could not believe as we believed. We told him we did not blame him for not believing as we believed, but for denying the faith which formerly he professed. Then he said: "I believe you hold that God hath given power to all men to believe, but if you do I shall deny it; yet, nevertheless I would, if I were nigh, come and hear you, for I can hear any;" and many other words were spoken which are too tedious here to relate. Whereupon, taking into our consideration his heinous crimes, in—

First, Denying the faith:

Secondly, Forsaking the church of Christ and joining with the church of England:

Thirdly, Despising the ordinances of God:

Fourthly, Contemning all the reproof of the church:—

We excommunicated him. And then we went to Elizabeth Langhorne, of the same town, and declared to her the cause of our coming, as before (p. 62). Then she asked whether we had been with any more in the town; we told her that was not an answer to our desires, neither was it anything to the purpose. Then she asked the same thing again; we told her we came not to give her an account of our actions, but to

reprove her for her faults, and to know her resolutions. Then she said: "I have received greater dispensations and cannot walk in those low forms which you walk in, for they are ceased. We desired her to prove what she said. She said she could not prove it to us, for what she knew, she said, she knew it by experience (then she began to declare her experiences of God,) and, until we had the same experience, and were gathered up into the same condition, we could not understand it. We told her we would not be guided by her fancy, but if she could prove what she said by the scriptures, we would believe her. She said she could not prove it by the letter, and, she said, we could not understand the mystery. We asked her what that mystery was which we could not understand? She said, "The mystery of godliness is great, yet I can prove what I say by the scriptures;" and then [she] instanced in this: "Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all." We told her, this text did not prove what she brought it for; then she asked what was meant by this text? We told her it meant as it said, viz. that Christ should deliver up the kingdom to the Father. She asked when this should be? We said, at the day of judgment. She asked what we meant by the day of judgment? We said: "The end of the world, when the last trump shall sound, and the dead shall arise, and appear before Christ to receive according to the deeds done in the flesh." She answered: "You hold a general judgment, and I hold a particular, for these things are done in me already." We desired her to prove what she had said. She said: "I cannot prove it to you, neither will I say any more until you have the same experience of God as I have." Then taking into our serious consideration her great errors and heinous crimes which she hath committed, in—

First, Denying of the faith:

Secondly, Forsaking of the church:

Thirdly, Denying all the ordinances of God:

Fourthly, Despising all the reproof and admonition of the church:—

We did excommunicate her, and so departed. And being departed we met with William Newgus, of Dunton, to whom we declared the resolutions of the congregation, and reproved him for his faults, in

First, Denying the faith.

Secondly, Forsaking the church of Christ.

Thirdly, Denying all the ordinances of God.

He said he did not deny the ordinances; for, he said, that those that were drawn forth to do them might do them; but for his part they were nothing to him; and as for prayer he said he would be silent, and not pray until he was drawn forth unto it. We asked him what drawing forth he would have? the scripture commanded us to pray continually. He said that was not sufficient. Then company coming unto us our discourse brake off, only we reproved him and exhorted him to repent. And so we departed and went to the wife of William Austin, unto whom we declared the cause of our coming and the resolutions of the church, as before; which when we had done, she said they were excommunicated already. We told her she was deceived; they were reproved and admonished, but not excommunicated. Then she confessed it and said: "'Tis true I was reproved by Mr. Denne for denying the faith wherein I was baptized, but I do not deny that Christ died for all, for I say that all shall be saved." We desired her to prove it, which she assayed to do; but when she could not, she went from it and said: "I will not be tied to come always unto you." We said: "We do not desire it, but if you would confess your faults and repent of your evil, we only desire you to come and be reconciled to the congregation, and then if there be any people nigher that walk according to the will of God, you may join with them." She answered and said: "The will of God? I say that all the world walks according

to the will of God." We desired her to prove it by the scriptures. She said she looked upon the scriptures as nothing, she trampled them under her feet. We said, we were very sorry to hear her despise and speak evil of the holy scriptures, and desired her to take heed what she said. She answered: "I believe you are sorry, but I glory in your trouble, being wrapt up into God;" and then much did she speak of the excellency of her condition. We told her she was deceived, for she was only deluded of the devil, and had separated herself from God. She then said: "I had as lieve be with the devil as with God himself, and I trample faith under my feet." Being almost amazed to hear her, we said, she was one of them the scripture speaks of, which do tread under foot the Son of God—(here she interrupted and said: "I do so")—and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they are sanctified, an unholy thing. She asked what we meant by "the blood of the covenant?" We said: "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." She said: "What, he that died upon the cross at Jerusalem?" he is nothing to me; I do not care for him." Then being weary with hearing her utter these, and many more wicked and blasphemous speeches against the Lord God and his Son Jesus Christ, his church, and the holy scriptures, we excommunicated her; and in pronouncing the sentence we used these words: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we do separate you from the church of God, delivering you unto Satan, to whom you have yielded yourself a servant to obey." She replied and said: "I rejoice to be with the devil; I had rather be with him than with you." Then we said: "To him we leave you with whom you rejoice to be."[7] And so we

[7] [Samuel Fisher affirms that these opinions were those of the Ranters; he says, "Some Ranters are not ashamed to say they are Christ, and God, and there is no other God than they, and what's in them, and such like blasphemies." Christ's coming is none other than "his coming into men by his Spirit, or in such manifestations" in men's hearts, that they may be able to live up with him in spirit, so as no more to need such

departed from her, and went to Robert Langhorne, to whom we declared the cause of our coming, as before (see p. 62). Then he began to speak against the church, and said: "I deny you to be the church of God." Then we would have proved it, but he would not hear, and said he would not dispute with us; "yet," said he, "I look upon you no otherwise than I look upon the papists, and I had rather join with any people, in any practice whatsoever, than with you." Then we asked him whether he had rather join with drunkards, thieves, and whoremasters than with us? He answered, Yea, he had; and then said he could not talk with us.

Then taking into our serious consideration his abominable errors and heinous crimes which he hath committed, in—

First, Denying the faith:

Secondly, Denying all the ordinances of God:

Thirdly, Forsaking the church and denying them to be the church of Christ:

Fourthly, Slighting the scriptures of truth:

Fifthly, Despising all the reproof and admonition of the church:—

We delivered him unto Satan, and so departed from him, and inquired for Joan Dunne; but she was not at home, and therefore we could not speak with her. Then, night drawing near, we returned home; and on the one and twentieth day of the aforesaid month we went to Dunton, in the county of Bedford, to speak with those persons at that town that formerly joined with the congregation. And, after we saw that it was impossible to get them together, we went first to John Harvey and his wife, to whom, after salutations, we said: "The cause of our coming at this time is this; the church of our Lord

lower helps from outward administrations, such carnal ordinances; "We are to know Christ as a man grown in us, risen up in us, &c." These rhapsodists were numerous; the chief part of them became Quakers. —Baby Baptism meer Babism, pp. 511, 513. fol. 1653.]

Jesus Christ, taking into their serious consideration the sad and deplorable estate and condition of many persons that formerly joined with them, but now are turned back and have forsaken the church, denying the faith, and despising the ordinances of God, being like unto the dog that is returned to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed yet returning to her wallowing in the mire, they have resolved, according to their duty, to reprove and admonish all such persons; and (if they shall despise their reproof) to proceed in separating them from the church of God; and, therefore, they have sent us two to you, to reprove you for your faults, viz. for denying the faith and forsaking the church of God, &c.. They said they did not deny the faith. Then I, knowing the cause of their first separation, confidently affirmed they did. The man said again he did not. I told him that what they did now I knew not, but this I was assured they did deny it; for the first cause of their separation was, because we believed that Christ died for all. Then he confessed that he did deny it, but he said: "Now I will not deny it, for as far as I know he might die for all; but this I am assured, that all he died for shall be saved." We desired him to prove what he said. He said he would, and thereupon alleged that the gift was as large as the offence; we granted it, but told him it did not prove what he brought it for, and therefore desired him either to prove it or confess his error; for we did believe that Christ died for some which shall not be saved. Here he seemed to take advantage, and said: "Now I am sure you have said that which you cannot prove." We answered and told him he was mistaken; "for first, it is evident that Christ died for all, for the scripture saith that he tasted death for every man; yet it saith again, that all men have not faith, and therefore shall not be saved, for he that believeth not shall be condemned." To this he said nothing. Then we desired him again to prove what he had said. He said, although we would not

believe it yet it was true, for he knew it by the revelation of God, of which he had great experience. We told him we would not be guided by any man's fancy, for we have a more sure word of prophecy which we desire to be guided by. Then he would say no more to this, but proceeded to the second thing that we charged him with, viz., forsaking the church, and said: "You blame me for leaving you, but I walked with you as long as I saw any light in those ordinances; but afterwards I was taken into the New Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all, and now am I in the church of God." We answered and said: "We told you before we would not be guided by any man's fancy, and saying that you are in the New Jerusalem will not persuade us that you are so, unless you can make it appear by the scriptures." Then he asked whether we only were the people of God? We answered: "Whatsoever we are, yet we know none that are accounted the church of God but those that walk in obedience to the ordinances of God." He confessed that, but said they walked in obedience to the ordinances of God. We demanded what ordinances? Then he began to speak, and made a very large discourse touching his discoveries of God (as he called them); declaring how God (as he said) had carried him from one dispensation to another, and that now he was in that condition that he could not sin, being taken up into that new heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness; and if he appeared as he should do, he should appear altogether in this new heaven. We replied and said: "We shall deny all that you have said, for your fancy will not persuade us to believe it, especially seeing your words are so contradictory; but if that which you have spoken were true, yet it is nothing to the purpose; and sure you have (through the multitude of your words) forgotten what you were about, for you were about to show us what ordinances you practise, and you tell us now of your discoveries of God; now there is a vast difference between God's

discovering of himself to man and man's obedience to God." Then he began to speak again, and said: "Paul was carried forth as we are; once he knew Christ after the flesh, for he saith; *Although I have known Christ after the flesh, yet from henceforth know I him so no more.* Now, Paul's knowing Christ after the flesh, was his knowing of him in those ordinances which you practise."[8] We then desired him, before he said any more, to prove what he had said, viz., that Paul's knowing Christ after the flesh was his knowing of him in those ordinances which we practise. "He found it by experience," he said. We desired him to prove it by the scriptures, for we would not be ruled by his fancy. Then he spake many things; but nothing was produced that [had] any show of truth in it. Then we told him that if he could but prove that those ordinances which we practise are carnal ordinances, then we would grant what he said. Then he said, there were carnal ordinances spoken of in the scripture. We granted it. Then he asked what ordinances they were? We told him, the author to the Hebrews would tell him what ordinances they were, viz. the ordinances under the law which were to continue until Christ. Then, after he saw that he could not prove what he had said by the scriptures, and that we would not believe his fancy which he called experience, he denied that he said so. We confidently affirmed that he spake it, word for word; he denied it again; we affirmed it, yet told him that, although he did say so, yet if he would now confess his error therein we would leave it. Then his wife (sitting by and looking very angrily upon him) said: "What! do you deny that Paul knowing Christ after the flesh was his knowing him in those ordinances which they practise? that is true enough and easily

[8] ["We must now learn to know Jesus Christ less after the flesh, and not to embody salvation in a mere outward dispensation, and so incarnate Jesus Christ over again from the glory and spirituality he is in."—Saltmarsh's Smoke in the Temple, &c. Preface, 4to. London, 1646.]

proved." Then we desired her to prove it, but she refused, saying: "No, I will say nothing yet." Then her husband began again to tell us a large story of their experiences of God, which [it] is impossible here to relate; so that, after we saw he spake many things but could not prove anything, we sharply reproved him for his faults. But he said we should have done it sooner, and asked us why we suffered them to remain so long. Then we confessed we had been negligent, but now we were resolved to neglect no longer. He answered: "It may be it is too late now, for I do contemn all your reproof." Then we asked his wife what she said; she answered she would say nothing more than her husband had said. Then we considering how heinously they have sinned, in—

First, Denying the faith:

Secondly, Forsaking the church of God:

Thirdly, Despising the ordinances of Jesus Christ:

Fourthly, Wresting the holy scriptures:

Fifthly, Despising and contemning all the reproof and admonition of the church:

We excommunicated them; which when we had done, John Harvey said: "Now I will say you have done your duty, although it be long first."

Then we departed from them and went to Will. Newgus and his wife, to whom we declared the cause of our coming, as before (see p. 89). The man said he had told us his mind at Potton, and thereupon waxed very angry, saying, he was confident we would fall to the ground, for we did that we had no power to do; and for his part, he said, he would not join with us again. Some other, words did he utter, but to no purpose; then we reproved him, but he would not hear. Then we turned to his wife who was more mild, and spake unto her, desiring her to declare unto us her mind. Then she said, she saw no light in those ordinances, and she could not walk any longer in them, for she apprehended them to be ceased. We desired

her to make it appear by the scriptures, but she refused to do it, and also refused to say any more unto us; wherefore, seeing they refused to join with us, and not only so but also denied the faith, despised all the ordinances of God, as prayer, &c., and despised and contemned all the reproof and correction of the church, we excommunicated them.

And then [we] went to the house of John Brocket, but he was not at home, and therefore we could not speak with him.

Then we went to Robert Biwater and declared to him the cause of our coming, as before (see p. 62). He said he was not gone backward but forward. We desired him to make it appear by the scriptures, that denying the faith and despising the ordinances of God, which he had done, was a going forwards. He said: "It may be I cannot make it appear to you." We told him again, that we are exhorted in the scripture to be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us to every one that asketh, and therefore if he would not give a reason for what he said, sure he had none of the Spirit of God. Whereupon he laughed and derided exceedingly; then we sharply reproved him for it, and again desired him to prove (if he could) what he had said. He said: "If I can; how, if I will not?" and yet continued laughing. Then, considering his condition, and the great faults which he hath committed, in—

First, Denying the faith:

Secondly, Despising all the ordinances of Jesus Christ:

Thirdly, Forsaking the congregation:

Fourthly, Despising and mocking at the reproof and correction of the church of God:

We delivered him unto Satan. And then he said: "You blamed me for laughing, but now I may laugh indeed." And so when we went from him he remained laughing; but it was but a little that we were parted from him that he turned, and

being smitten in heart as we conceived, said: "Friends, I thank you for your love, for I believe it is in that you do this unto me;" and so he departed.

Then we went to Nich. Elliott, to whom we declared the cause of our coming, as before (see p. 62); then he said he was not gone back, for he was gathered up into higher dispensations. We told him, we were sure he was gone back from those things which he formerly professed; but as for those high dispensations he spake of, we would not believe they were so, unless he could make it appear by the scriptures. Then he said: "I know no authority you have to call me to an account, therefore I will not talk with you;" and so he turned to go from us. We desired him to tarry; then he turned again but would say nothing to us. Then we considering how that he had forsaken the congregation and persisted in:

Denying of the faith, and all the ordinances of God, and despising the reproof and correction of the church, we excommunicated him.

Now this is the substance of our actions with those persons.

Afterwards it was propounded, Whether it was not necessary that the book of Records should be read at the general meetings, in the presence of the congregation; several reasons were produced to prove it to be necessary, viz.: first, that thereby falsities may be prevented from entering in; secondly, that all the congregation thereby may become acquainted therewith; which thing being taken into consideration, it was concluded to be necessary, and thereupon it was read and approved of.

Afterwards it was propounded, Whether it was according to order for any person to make it their sole business to go from place to place to preach, excepting such are sent by the congregation; about this question there was much debate on both sides, but at length it was referred until the next general meeting, to be then again considered of.

ANNO DOMINI, 1654.

On the 9th day of the second month, at a general meeting held at Fenystanton, the question that was referred [at] the last meeting was again propounded, viz., whether it was according to order for any person to make it their sole business to go from place to place to preach, excepting those which are sent by the congregation. Upon this question there was some debate, and at length these things were concluded upon, viz.:—

First, That it shall be lawful for any person to improve their gifts in the presence of the congregation.

Secondly, That it shall be lawful only for such as are approved by the congregation, to preach publicly to the world.

Thirdly, That it shall not be lawful for any person to make it their sole business to go from place to place to preach, except they be sent by the congregation.

Provided that if an approved person, going about his own occasions or otherwise, shall have an opportunity, accidentally offered, to preach the gospel, he shall not offend, although he maketh use thereof, it being no more than his duty so to do.

Afterwards, John Denne and Edmond Mayle were appointed to go to Mrs. Hare, of Abersly, [Abbotsley] in the county of Huntingdon, to reprove her for her faults, in denying the faith, and the ordinances of God.

Also, they were appointed to go to Jesper Docrah, of Basingbourne.

On the one and twentieth day of the third month, at a general meeting held at Caxton Pastures, John Denne and Edmond Mayle gave an account of their proceedings with Mrs. Hare, and Jesper Docrah, as followeth:—

Brethren,

On the five and twentieth day of the second month, according to your order, we went to Abersly to Mrs. Hare, to whom we

declared that the congregation, taking into their serious consideration the condition of many persons that formerly joined with us, but now have departed from us, denying the faith and the ordinances of God, they have resolved to discharge their duties concerning those persons, and accordingly they have sent us to you to reprove you for your faults which you have committed, in denying the faith and despising the ordinances of God. She answered that she did not know what she believed, for God had carried her through many dispensations, but now she did not know her own mind; and many other words did she use which are too tedious here to relate, yet altogether despising the way of God. Whereupon we sharply reproved her for her sins; but she nothing regarded our reproof, only when we departed she promised to consider of our words.

Afterwards we went to Basingbourne to speak with Jesper Docraw, but he was not at home; whereupon we went to Royston, where we accidentally met with him, and declared to him the cause of our coming to him, viz., that we were sent by the congregation to know the cause of his so long separation from them, and to see whether he remained steadfast in the faith. He answered that he was the same which formerly he had been for matter of faith, but he confessed that he being alone a long time was much discouraged, and at length did go to the church of England. We desired to know the reason why he went to the church of England? The man being much amazed answered, that he was not provided to answer, and therefore desired us to forbear speaking to him, and he promised to write to us to give us satisfaction; whereupon we departed from him, and at our departure he sighed and said: "Oh! that it were with me as formerly!" We supposed he spake in reference to his wife which he had lately married.

Then the congregation, taking these things into their serious consideration, resolved to wait upon these persons until the next meeting.

On the 2nd day of [the] fifth month, at a general meeting held at Fenystanton, the congregation again took into consideration the condition of Mrs. Hare, of Abotesly, and appointed John Denne and John Gilman to go unto her the second time, to reprove her for her faults, and if she did not repent to excommunicate her.

On the 13th day of the sixth month, at a general meeting held at Caxton Pastures, the congregation again took into their consideration the condition of Jesper Dockra, together with the breach of his promise. Whereupon John Denne stood up and said: "Brethren, on the five and twentieth day of the fifth month I accidentally met with Jesper Dockra, at which time I took occasion to tell him of the breaking of his promise; and he then told me that he had declared his mind to one of our friends of Royston, who promised to declare it to us, and therefore he did not write. I told him that was no sufficient excuse for him, for we heard nothing of it, neither did I think that they promised to declare it to us. He then said, he promised to declare [it] to the congregation. I told him they were one congregation and we another, for we did not meet together. Then he asked where our meetings were? I told him every first day at my house, but upon this day there would be a general meeting at my house, and this day six weeks at Fenystanton. Then he said he would, if it were possible, come over to the congregation as this day, but howsoever he would come the next meeting."

Then the congregation hearing this, deferred the business, expecting to see him.

On the four and twentieth day of the seventh month, at a general meeting held at Fenystanton, John Denne stood up and said: "Brethren, you were pleased formerly to appoint brother Gilman (see p. 62.), and myself, to go to Dunton, to deal with

those persons, which accordingly we did; but John Brocket not being at home (see p. 86), we could not speak with him. But on the twentieth day of this present month, we being together at St. Neots, accidentally met with him, and took occasion to speak to him, as we were commanded by you, reproving him for his faults: but he told us he knew our intentions, and bade us say that we had to say, for he would say nothing to us. We asked him, how he knew our intentions before they were declared? He answered, that he knew how we had dealt with the rest at Dunton, and he was of the same mind with them (see pp. 91, 95), and therefore he desired us to say what we had to say; and this was all that we could get from him, although we earnestly desired him to give us a reason of his words. Whereupon we, considering his heinous crimes which he hath committed, in—

First, Denying the faith;

Secondly, Forsaking the church of God;

Thirdly, Slighting and despising the ordinances of God;

Fourthly, Wresting the holy scriptures;

Fifthly, and contemning all the reproof and admonition of the church—we excommunicated him.

On the 5th day of the ninth month, at a general meeting held at Caxton Pastures, these ensuing things were propounded, and taken into consideration.

First, John Denne stood up and said: "Brethren,—My father did earnestly desire to see your faces this day; but being by sickness prevented, he desired me to declare unto you that he, coming accidentally to Canterbury, found there a great company of persons, of which there were some which had been formerly baptized of him,[9] and others which had lately been

[9] [Mr. H. Denne was in the county of Kent at the close of the year 1645. He then preached at Rochester, Chatham, Canterbury, and other places. "In his travels," says Edwards, "he dipped many." The

baptized, but all of them out of order; whereupon they greatly desired him to tarry with them. His answer was that he could not speak either good or bad, but what the congregation should say to whom he belonged. Whereupon they resolved to send two messengers speedily to us, to know our minds. But he desired them to spare that labour, promising that, so soon as it should please the Lord to bring him unto the congregation, he would declare their desires unto us; which promise, at this time, he intended to fulfil, but being prevented, as aforesaid, desired me to declare these things unto you; and likewise, he doth earnestly desire you to declare your minds herein.

Whereupon the congregation entered into debate upon the business, and at length concluded to send unto them, to know—

First, Whether they were, as yet, unprovided?

Secondly, Whether their affections were the same as formerly?

And accordingly a letter was sent unto them.

Afterwards, Edmond Mayle spoke, and declared how that Roger Walkwood had sinned, in—

First, Neglecting his calling, and walking in idleness:

Secondly, Keeping evil company, as drunkards, and drinking with them excessively:

Thirdly, And in forsaking the assembly of the saints.

For which things he hath been already reproved and admonished twice, according to the rule of Christ, Matt. xviii.; which thing the congregation taking into their serious consideration, and he

county was also visited in previous years by Mr. Kiffin, Mr. Lamb, and others, and many conversions resulted from their labours. Of Kiffin, Edwards thus speaks, "About September last [1649], one Kiffin an anabaptist went his progress in Kent, and did a great deal of hurt." He elsewhere calls Kiffin, "a great active anabaptist."—Gangræna, part i. pp. 36, 37, 106.]

being absent, resolved to send unto him, requiring him to come to the congregation to give satisfaction for those things which would be laid to his charge, or his neglect should be looked upon as contempt against the congregation; whereupon two were sent unto him to certify him of the same.

On the 19th day of the ninth month, Sam. Shatbold certified the congregation of a sad and lamentable fire, which happened on the seventeenth day of this present month, upon the houses of John Wilson, of Great Eversden (a member of the congregation), which suddenly burnt down to the ground his barns and all his outhouses, with all his hay and grain; for which cause he desired the advice of the congregation, viz.: whether he should go to the justices of the peace for the county, to desire letters of request from them to the inhabitants of the county, for the gathering of money towards the reparation of his loss. Which desire we taking into our consideration, and upon some debate finding the reputation of the gospel to be therein so much concerned, appointed the four and twentieth day of this present month to meet at Papworth Everard, to consider further of the business; and desired Sam. Shatbold to certify our brother Wilson thereof, and to desire him from the congregation to be there and then present, that by him we might [be] certified of the quantity of his loss, and also to advise with him about the state of affairs between his landlord and himself.

Which thing being done, we met at Papworth Everard on the four and twentieth day of this present month, according to former order, brother Wilson being there present; where after prayer and supplication to the Lord for wisdom and understanding, we first inquired into the quantity of the loss, which, upon the testimony of himself and brother Shatbold, appeared to be about thirty pounds, besides the houses which he only hired.

Secondly, we took into our consideration what way to take for the reparation of this his loss; whether to endeavour to collect money of the county, or only to make the churches acquainted therewith. Upon which thing we had much debate; but at length concluded only to make the churches acquainted therewith, and not to trouble any other people. Whereupon we appointed a day to meet with the several congregations at Cambridge, and sent letters to them to certify them thereof; which were as follows:—

The brethren in and about Caxton and Fenystanton, to the church of God, &c., do send greeting.

Dear and holy Brethren,—After salutation due unto you in the Lord Jesus, these are to certify you of the sad and deplorable condition of our brother John Wilson, of Great Eversden, who, through a sad accident of fire which happened upon the 17th day of this instant month, had all his grain in his barns, together with all his hay, burned and consumed, amounting to the loss of thirty pounds, to the great impoverishing of this our dear brother. Which thing we taking into our serious consideration, and finding the reputation of the gospel to be therein so much concerned, thought it convenient speedily to procure a general meeting, for which we have appointed the eighth day of the next month, to meet at Cambridge, at the house of our brother Hindes; to which place we beseech you, as you tender the honour of God, to send two of you to meet with us, and to certify us what you will be pleased to contribute towards the necessities of our dear brother. In which thing we beseech you, brethren, be not negligent, knowing how acceptable it will be in the sight of God; for he that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and whatsoever he giveth it shall be repaid; for as a man soweth so shall he also reap. Now, brethren, hoping that

you will be forward in this thing, not knowing how soon the case may be our own, we shall commit you to God, expecting to hear from you at the time appointed, and until then remain,

Your loving brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Papworth Everard, the 24th day
of the ninth month, 1654.

Several copies of this letter were sent to these ensuing congregations: first, to Warboys and Chatteris; secondly, to Ely, Littleport, and Streatham; thirdly, to Cambridge; fourthly, to Salsham, and Burwell, and Wigan; fifthly, to Wood Ditton, and the places adjacent; sixthly, to Wilbrom [Wilbraham] and Balsham; seventhly, to Melbourne, Royston, Hawson, and Thaxfield.

On the seven and twentieth day of the ninth month, we received a letter from Canterbury in answer to that which was sent unto them which was as follows:—

To the church of God in Caxton.

Beloved Brethren,—We salute you in the Lord. We being sufficiently informed of your faithfulness and love to the truth, in your willingness to promote the publishing and spreading of it, as appears by your readiness in sending our beloved brother Denne to the ministerial performance of that great work, both to us and others:—we thank the Lord who hath put that earnest care into your hearts, desiring from our very souls that both you and we, and all that do love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, may abound yet more and more in every good word and work to the praise of his grace, both to the truth and to the lovers of it.

Now, dear brethren, forasmuch as we do not expect our brother Denne's coming to Canterbury to us (although we

hear that by the great and special hand of God he is returned to you again, for which we desire to be very thankful to our God who hath been so very gracious unto him and all his relations), because he was not his own, and could not make any promise of coming again unto us, though he knew all our desires, by reason he knew not the mind of the church for the future, so that we have been in suspense between hope and fear all the time of his absence; and not the church only, but many more also in and about this city, which of enemies are become friends to the truth, they being very much affected with him for the truth's sake.

Now, brethren, in order to his coming to Canterbury to do the work of the Lord, we have, in all Christian humility, sent you these lines, whereby we do earnestly entreat you (being absent as though we were present), that for the honour of God's name, and the truth, and the good of many poor souls, which may be as much eclipsed if he come not again as it was advanced by his being there amongst us; we have many more reasons to move you to a free condescension to this weighty matter, viz., that the truth hath lain hid these many years in this place, being trodden under foot, and so clouded by reason of a mixt party that had all owned once but were turned out of the way, most of them into the mystery of iniquity. Only some few that did all this time own the principles of the doctrine of Christ, but what for want of inward and outward abilities they were not able to do much more than they did, especially having so great discouragements by the departure of so many from the truth. And having no officers to deal with them according to the word, we were looked upon all alike, as men destitute wholly of the truth; and by this means, according to the apostle Peter's word, the way of truth had a very evil report. But now the Lord hath been pleased to open a door both to you and us, blessed be his name, that we have good ground to hope [it] will prove effectual to many; be-

cause he hath been pleased to magnify his grace, and to make his truth honourable in the eyes of many in the world. And therefore, now is the time; let us up, and be doing. And the Lord will be with us in taking away that thick darkness which hath covered the truth, but is now a breaking forth like the sun from under a cloud.

Another reason why we desire our brother Denne to be a labourer in this work in this place is, because of his wisdom and understanding, that our God hath furnished him withal in the mysteries of the gospel; and it is our duty to use all possible means we can that we may gain the more. And we judge him to be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers; for here are many unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers of minds, especially they called Ranters, whose mouths must be stopped. And our brother Denne hath been an instrument in the hand of God, for the snatching of some of them as firebrands out of the fire already, which we hope will be close walkers with God.

We might add many more reasons, but we shall forbear; knowing that a word to the wise is enough. All which considered, we judge that you cannot reasonably deny our desires for our brother Denne's coming to Canterbury; but rather to appoint and send him to stay with us as long as the Lord shall please, here being very great need of him. Thus hoping that you will rightly weigh this matter in the balance of the sanctuary and right reason, we shall say no more to it; building upon all your faithfulness to us and the truth as it is in Jesus. Brethren, we beseech you for the Lord's sake that you join together with us in prayer to God, both for us and all saints, that we may be kept by the mighty power and Spirit of God through faith unto salvation, and blameless as the sons of God, shining as lights in the world, brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day of Christ's coming.

The love of God the Father, and the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ, with the comfortable communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you and all that love him, even for evermore. Amen.

By this, our dear brethren, you may fully know that the affections of us all are as formerly; and that we are unprovided of one to go in and out before us.

Your ever loving brethren and companions in the kingdom and patience of Christ Jesus:—

Rich. Beacham,	Jonas Cooke,
Tho. Beacham,	John Wigmore,
Tho. Jarman,	Joh. Skillett,
Daniel Jarman,	John Smith,
Joh. Ratcliffe,	Rich. Gouldhack,
	Joh. Miles.

From Canterbury, this 13th of the ninth mouth.

On the 8th day of the tenth month, according to former order, we met at Cambridge, to take into our consideration the condition of our brother John Wilson. Where, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, we entered into debate about the business. And after some consultation we resolved to help our brother amongst ourselves, and not to trouble any other congregation far distant from us. Because we have had many times experience of the many inconveniences that follow the sending a great way for contributions. And therefore, the elders of the several congregations met together, promised in the behalf of the respective congregations to which they belonged, to give a certain sum, as it was then concluded. Which sums of money, brother Arthur Hindes was appointed to receive for the use of our brother Wilson. And it was ordered that they should be brought into him by the first day of the

eleventh month. (The sum promised by us was six pounds.) Which thing being done, brother Wilson was desired to make an agreement with his landlord, about the houses which were burned. For we told him, that although we were willing to help him in this his distress, yet we were very unwilling to build these houses. Brother Hindes was likewise desired to see that there was an agreement, before he parted with the money.

On the 17th day of the tenth month, at a general meeting held at Fenystanton, the letter which came from Canterbury was read, and taken into consideration. Upon which there was much debate, and some controversy; some being willing that our brother Denne should go to Canterbury, there to reside; and others being unwilling. But at length, taking the necessities of the people into our consideration, which we were certified of by our brother Henry Denne, this answer was concluded upon, with one consent, to be delivered to our brother Denne: viz., that the congregation is unwilling to lay such a burden upon him, as to send him such a long journey contrary to his mind; but if he should be willing to go to reside there, the congregation would willingly condescend thereunto. Brother Denne being absent, John Denne and John Gilman were appointed to deliver the resolution of the congregation unto him.

Afterwards, Edmond Mayle declared, that Roger Walkwood being sent unto according to former order, came unto the congregation, and confessed his faults in those things for which he was accused and reproved: viz., for—

First, Idleness in neglecting his calling;

Secondly, Keeping evil company, as drunkards, and drinking with them excessively;—

Thirdly, Forsaking the assembly of the saints:

and promised amendment. Yet, nevertheless, contrary to his promise, [he] hath since that, as we do hear, been over-

taken in the same. Whereupon the congregation entered into some debate, what to do concerning him. Yet at length, to manifest their patience towards him, [it was] resolved that Edmond Mayle and Thomas Phillips should go unto him once more, to reprove him for his faults: that so, if it might be, he might be made sensible of his hypocrisy, and brought unto repentance.

Afterward John Denne spake as followeth:—"Brethren, you know how greatly servants are exhorted in the scripture to be obedient unto their masters according to the flesh, and not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward; and they that have believing [masters] ought not to despise them because they are brethren, but the rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. And, indeed, great is the evil when servants are disobedient to their masters, which thing I wish that I never had had occasion to speak of in this place. Which, indeed, now I have, concerning our sister, Elizabeth Noble; who being lately my servant, was in that time altogether disobedient. Sometimes replying that she would not do what she was commanded, and other times, being negligent, left it undone. And moreover, as an aggravation to her faults, [she] went away out of my service, contrary to my will, and without my knowledge; for which things I did (according to my duty) reprove her in secret. But she refused to hearken. Whereupon I did it the second time, in the presence of our brother Edmond Mayle, and our brother Christopher Marriatt. And likewise they reproved her, desiring her to confess her faults; but she refused to hearken. For which cause I do now, in the presence of God, declare it unto you; desiring you to deal according to your duties herein." Whereupon, she was the third time reproved, by the whole congregation, and desired to repent; which at length she did, in the presence of the congregation, and thereby gave satisfaction both to our

brother Denne and to the congregation. But in the mean time, while these things were in agitation, our brother John Noble, her father, being very angry, brake out into a very great passion; charging our brother Denne with partiality, with many others. For which things, they being untrue, he was reproved by the congregation. Bnt he refused to hearken thereunto, but increased more and more in passion. Whereupon he was desired to withdraw for the present, and to seek unto God for wisdom. He replied, that he could do that without the teaching of the congregation. And so he departed.

But afterwards, upon the one and twentieth day of this present month, he was again reproved for these things. But he would not hearken thereunto.

Wherefore, upon the first day of the eleventh month, he was the third time reproved and admonished. At which time, with much sorrow and contrition, he confessed his faults; not only in the foregoing things, but also in despising the reproof of the congregation. And thereupon he was reconciled.

Christopher Marriatt and Tho. Coxe were at this meeting appointed to go to Over, to speak with the widows Binnes and Sneesby, and to reprove them for their faults in forsaking the church of God. These persons had long before committed great faults; yet upon confession were reconciled to the congregation (see page 85). But now through their unconstancy, [they] are turned aside the second time.

According to former order, John Denne and John Gilman declared the resolutions of the congregation to Henry Denne. But, although he was very willing to go, it did not give him satisfaction; because it was not an express commission. Whereupon, the congregation met again, upon the nine and twentieth day of the tenth month, at Papworth Everard, to take the business into consideration. At which time, we

being fully satisfied of the willingness of our brother Denne to go to Canterbury, it was fully concluded by the congregation that he should go. Whereupon a letter was drawn up to be sent to them, to certify them thereof; which letter was as followeth:—

The brethren in and about Caxton and Fenystanton, in the counties of Huntingdon and Cambridge, to the faithful in Christ Jesus at Canterbury, with grace, mercy, and peace, from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear and holy brethren, called out of this present evil world, and sanctified through the knowledge of the truth by the Spirit of our God; we do greatly rejoice, giving thanks unto our God, who according to the riches of his mercy, and the abundant glory of his grace, manifested in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath shed abroad his love in your hearts, teaching you to love the brethren, and to receive the truth in the love and simplicity thereof, as it is in Jesus; being confident that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ. Beloved brethren, we received your letter, dated the thirteenth day of the ninth month, whereby we do understand that it is your earnest desire that our beloved brother Denne should come to reside with you. Which thing we have taken into our serious consideration, and although at the first we were very unwilling to condescend thereunto, being very desirous to enjoy his company with us, that by him we might be edified and comforted in the way of our God; yet taking your condition into our consideration, and fearing lest through the love of ourselves we should any wise hinder the honour of God, or the good of his people—we have thought it meet in this particular to satisfy your holy desires, earnestly desiring that he may be beneficial unto you, as, blessed be our God, he hath been in this place, both for the enlightening of many persons that sat in blindness, and for the strengthening of the church

of God. We beseech you, brethren, pray for us; that we may labour in the unity of the faith, being filled with the fruits of righteousness and holiness to the glory and praise of God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren, farewell. Be of one mind. Live in peace; and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit, shall be with you all, evermore. Amen.

Your brethren, assembled in the name of
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Caxton, the 31st day of
the 10th month, 1654.

Before this letter was sent, there came a messenger from Canterbury to know the resolutions of the congregation; to whom it was declared that the congregation had granted their request. And when he returned, the foregoing letter was sent by him.

On the thirtieth day of the tenth month, we received a letter from Melbourne, which was as followeth:—

To the elders of the church of God in Caxton and Fenystanton, we direct these few lines.

Brethren, after salutations due unto you and your wives, we inform you that we sent your letter (see page 104.) unto brother Grey of Thaxfield, the elder, but have received no collection. We also sent two of the brethren to that church, to know if they had gathered anything; if not, to desire them to hasten, because the time was nigh to pay in the collection, according to the church's appointment. Brother Grey, the elder, made this doubt; whether brother Wilson were under any government or no, and whether that society that he sat down under were not able to relieve him; if not, he for his part would give him something, provided he

wanted food and raiment. He conceives the way that the elders took was disorderly, in subscribing in the name of the churches for the sums. His reason is, because he hath been fooled in such cases. And further he questions, whether he be in the faith or no.

Brethren, we, whose names are subscribed to this letter, do question whether this man, by name Anthony Grey, is fit to bear the office of an elder in the church of God, for these reasons:—first, because he is not endued with hospitality. We witness in the case of our brother Page, a poor man, in great want very nigh them; and now in the case of brother Wilson. Other poor saints have had help of us, as sister Whittock, but nothing of them, and many others. They all in that place are rich, and it is their opinion that every church ought to keep their own poor, especially they which are for a supper. They also deny that those which are for a supper are in the faith.

John Prime,	Tho. Gatward,
Will. Grey,	Will. Herrod,
Rich. Metcalfe,	Tho. Grey,
Benia. Metcalfe,	James Grey.

From Royston this 27th day of the ninth month, 1654.

On the first day of the eleventh month, according to our promise, the money was carried into Cambridge, to our brother Hindes, for the use of our brother Wilson.

On the six-and-twentieth day of the eleventh month, we met at Papworth Everard, to provide necessaries for our brother Denne's journey to Canterbury. At which time brother Catlin, of Little Ravely, was appointed to go along with him. Money and horses were also provided for them.

On the eight-and-twentieth day of the eleventh [month]

at a general meeting held at Caxton Pastures, John Denne stood up and spake as followeth:—Brethren, our brother Mayle and myself, being absent from the assemblies of the congregation upon the fourteenth day of this instant month, I shall at this time give you an account of our proceedings at that time. In the morning we went to Chatteris, and when we had gathered the brethren together, after prayer and a word of exhortation, we inquired into their estate and condition. Whereby we found that since the time we were last with them, many persons were excommunicated from them; as Jeremie Rose of Many, Anne Timbes, Lawrence Baysley, Andrew Hawkins, John Tye, and some others of Chatteris; and this for great and heinous sins, as appeared by the testimony of the brethren there present. Likewise we found some carried away by those people commonly called Quakers,[1] as namely, Will. Custons (a man well known unto you), John Dring, and Thomas Rosse. These were accused by the brethren for denying the scriptures and the ordinances of God, and for affirming that the doctrine preached and received by them was not the doctrine of Christ, but the doctrine of the devil. Whereupon, according to our duties, we called them to an account for these things. The last thing they confessed, viz. that the doctrine declared and received by them was the doctrine of the devil. We desired them to make it appear. They answered, the light in their consciences made it manifest. We told them we had not so learned Christ, as to be guided by their fancy; and therefore we desired them to prove what they said by the scriptures. They replied, that the light in their consciences was the rule they desired to walk by. We granted that an enlightened conscience was a guide; but we demanded by what the conscience should be

[1] [Fox and his followers were first called Quakers in 1650, by Justice Bennett of Derby, "because I bid them tremble at the word of the Lord."—Fox's Journal, i. 119.]

enlightened? They answered, "Not by the scriptures, for the conscience was above the scriptures; and the scriptures ought to be tried by it, and not that by the scriptures." We then proved, that the scriptures were the rule of trial to try all spirits by. But they refused to hearken unto us; wherefore we did sharply reprove them, and exhorted them to take heed what they did, for great danger hung over their heads, and should surely be executed if they did not repent. Then we began to speak of the ordinances of God which formerly they believed and practised, as baptism, breaking of bread, &c. These they affirmed to be carnal ordinances; and Tho. Rosse said, 'That it was folly in him to be baptized.' Whereupon we again reproved them sharply for denying the holy scriptures, and turning aside from the ordinances of God, and earnestly exhorted them to repent, and to break off their sins by righteousness. But they refused to hearken. And truly we cannot conceive that our words took any impression in them; only when we parted from them, Will. Custons desired us to pray for them.

But, brethren, you must understand that their denial of the scriptures, is only denying them to be a rule to try the spirit by. For they say, that they own the scriptures to be a true declaration of the estate and condition of those persons they speak of; and those ordinances commanded therein, they own to be true to those persons in that time. But they are no rule for us to walk by. We must every one look to the light of our own consciences. Thus have I given you an account of our actions that day.

Afterwards, upon the fifteenth day of this instant, in our journey homewards, we came to Colne, and spake with Elizabeth Gowler, whom we found turned aside as the former, denying to receive the scriptures for a rule, and denying the ordinances of God which formerly she believed. For which things she was twice admonished by our brethren of Warboys,

and by us this third time; but she refused to hearken. Yet we earnestly desired and entreated her to consider what she did, and showed unto her the evil of her ways, exhorting her to repent. But she stubbornly persisted in her evil; saying she had considered thereof already. Whereupon, considering her great evil, in—

First, Departing from the holy scriptures,

Secondly, Denying the ordinances of God,

Thirdly, Denying the church of God, and

Fourthly, Despising all their reproof and admonition,—

we excommunicated her.

And then we went to Erith, to sister Pharepoint; whom we found to be in the same condition with the former persons: viz. denying to receive the scriptures as a rule to walk by, and denying the ordinances of God. For which things she was formerly reproved by our brother Marriatt, and our brother Tho. Cox (see page 111.), by order from the congregation; a declaration of which I suppose you shall hear anon (see page 120). And now again did we reprove her for these things, but she refused to hearken. Then we earnestly desired [her] to consider what she did, and showed unto her the evil of her ways. But she would not give ear unto us, but exhorted us to look within; for the light within was the only rule to be guided by. Then we proved that the scriptures were the rule to try all things by; and likewise demanded, whether if a man should be persuaded to murder, adultery, and such other sins, by that which he thought was the light within himself, he ought to do it or no? She answered, that she thought he must do it, if he were carried forth thereunto. But for her part, she said, she was carried forth to no such thing; but to holiness and righteousness. We then sharply reproved her, and besought her to beware of such desperate crimes. But our words did nothing avail, for she remained obstinate, persisting in her great errors: viz.,

First, Denying the holy scriptures.

Secondly, Departing from the ordinances of God.

Thirdly, Denying the church of God.

Fourthly, Despising all our reproof and admonition; which things we taking into our serious consideration, and finding no hope of repentance, we excommunicated her.

And thus have I given you an account of that day's proceedings.

I have yet something more to declare unto you, concerning Mrs. Hare of Abotesley; unto whom you were pleased to appoint our brother Gilman and myself to go. And accordingly, on the five and twentieth day of this present month, we went unto her; and declared unto her, that the last time we were with her she promised to consider of our words, which thing moved the congregation to wait upon her. "But now, considering that there is no alteration in you, we are come now at this time, once more to admonish you of your faults, in denying the faith, despising the ordinances of God, &c." She answered, that she could do nothing, but that which God carried her forth to do. We replied, that God desires that all should walk in his ways, and carrieth forth none to disobedience. She answered, she did not conceive it was disobedience: for it was a greater evil in joining with us, than in separating from us; and she was resolved never to join with us more. And many other evil words did she utter, which are too tedious here to relate. For which things we did sharply reprove her, and exhorted [her] to consider from whence she was fallen and repent. But she despised and contemned all our words, declaring that it was in vain for us to speak to her. Which things we taking into our serious consideration, and finding her sins to be so great in—

First, Denying the faith.

Secondly, Despising the ordinances of God.

Thirdly, Contemning all the reproof and admonition of the church, we excommunicated her. Which when we had done, she lifted up her hands, saying, "Father, I thank thee."

Afterwards, Tho. Cox spake as followeth: — Brethren, according to your appointment (p. 111), brother Marriatt and myself, upon the eleventh day of the eleventh month, went to Over, to our sister Binnes, and declared to her that the congregation sent us to see how she did, and whether she remained yet in the ways of God. She said, that she thought that she was not yet in the way of God; for she found that those that walked in the way of God in former times, were in a perfect condition, free from sin, and she did not find herself to be in such a condition. We told her, we did not find that the saints of old were in a perfect condition, free from sin: for the apostle himself, who was much endued with the Spirit of God, did not count himself to be in such a condition; but did desire to keep his body in subjection, lest when he had preached to others, he himself should be cast away. To this she would make no answer. Then we asked her concerning the doctrine of Christ, which she had practised; viz., repentance, faith, and baptism, whether that was the way of God or no? She answered, that repentance was; but she said her former repentance was but feigned. We then reproved her for her dissimulation. But she refused to hearken. But she said that water baptism was ceased, and the baptism of the Spirit was the true baptism. We told her the baptism of water was not ceased, for the scriptures saith that some persons, upon whom the Holy Ghost fell, so that they spake with tongues and magnified God, were afterwards baptized with water. She answered, that the scriptures were not altogether a rule for her to walk by. Then we, apprehending that it was in vain to discourse with her, sharply reproved her for her faults, declaring the danger she had brought herself into by depart-

ing from the ways of God. But she nothing regarded our words.

Then we went to sister Sneesby, whom we found in a very sad and deplorable condition. She wept as soon as she saw us, and desired us to pray for her: for she was much troubled in her mind. We then told her, that the congregation sent us to see how she did, and that we were very sorry to see her in that condition. And likewise we told her, that we heard that one of those commonly called Quakers was at her house, and preached there; and we were afraid his preaching had brought her into that condition. She answered, that she could hear very little that he said; but she said she had read many of his books. Then we asked her whether the reading of them were not the cause of her trouble? Then she confessed, that after she had read them she was much troubled. Then we exhorted her to look into the word of God and his promises, and therein should she find comfort. She said, that she could find but little comfort in reading of the scriptures. We asked her, whether she did not find comfort formerly in reading of them. She answered that she had. Then we did advise her to continue reading of them, and to wait upon God in his own way, and in the end he would give her comfort. Likewise, we did reprove her for giving way to that man to preach at her house. She answered that it was her husband's desire, and she could not help it.

After this we went to Erith, to our sister Pharepoint; to whom we declared, that the congregation hearing that she was turned aside from the commandments of the Lord, did send us to see whether it were true or no, and if it were, to reprove her for it (p. 111). She told us, that the commandments and ordinances of God were all carnal; and she asked what the shell was to the kernel, or the shadow to the substance. She said she had the substance, and therefore would not look unto such outward things. We then desired her to

prove that the ordinances of God were carnal, or that she had so much of the substance as that she did not stand in need of the ordinances of the Most High. She said, her conscience told her so. We replied, her conscience might deceive her, and therefore desired her to make it appear by the scriptures. She answered that the conscience was more than the scriptures. Whereupon we told her, that we were very sorry to see that she should make so light of the word of God, and did reprove and admonish her for her faults, declaring what a dangerous estate she had brought herself into. But she refused to hearken unto us; so we departed from her.

After this our brother Edmond Mayle began to speak as followeth:—"Brethren, an account of the proceedings of myself and brother Denne, upon the fourteenth day of this present month, you have already heard (see p. 115). At which time, we hearing that our brethren at Sutton, in the Isle of Ely, were departed from the truth, it was thought requisite that our brother, Robt. Cole, and myself should go unto them. And accordingly, upon the eighteenth day of this instant month, we went, and entered into the house of Phillip Eppings, to whom we declared that we were sent unto him, hearing that he was turned aside from the truth; wherein he had caused great sorrow to the church. He answered, that he was well, and we needed not to grieve for him, but for our own sins. But we desired him to tell us, why he forsook the ways of God. He said he had not forsaken them. We replied, that if he would be judged by the word of God, we would make it appear that he had forsaken them. He said, Christ was the word of God, and he had the witness in himself; his own conscience bore him witness. But we desired him to make it appear to us by the testimony of scripture. Then he desired us to look within to our consciences, and that was all the proof that he would allege.

Then we told him, that we were very sorry to see that he should forsake the scriptures, and give heed unto fancy; for we did not doubt (if he would be tried by the scriptures, which formerly he owned and walked by), but we should make it appear to be only fancy. After which, he being weary of our discourse, we desired to know what answer we should give to them that sent us. He desired us to tell you he was well. We told him that would not suffice. Then we asked him what he said to those ordinances of Christ which he formerly believed, viz., baptism, breaking of bread, &c. He said, they were nothing to him; they were but figures. We asked, whether he owned them or not? He said, he did not. And then we asked him, whether we should return that answer; and he said, 'Yea.' Then reprimanding him for his faults, we departed from him, and went to William Eppings and his wife, to whom we declared the cause of our coming, and demanded of them the reason of their departure from the truth. The man was sick upon his bed; but the woman said they had not forsaken the truth. We said that we heard they had, and should rejoice if it were not so; but we desired them to deal plainly with us, and tell us what they believed concerning those things which formerly they received by the Spirit of God, viz., whether believers ought to be baptized, and the servants of the Lord to break bread together. She answered, she could not tell what to say. We asked her, whether she did not know her own mind? She said, 'No.' Then we asked, whether we should speak a word of exhortation from the scriptures. She said, she was not free to hear. Then we asked her, whether we should pray with them. She said, 'No; she was not free in that neither.' Then we desired the man (being sick), that he would, in a few words, tell us whether or no he did own those truths which he formerly believed and practised. He said, 'A few words will not serve; for,' said he, 'two of the

church went to a poor maid at Colne to catch her.' We asked him, how he, being upon his sick bed, durst say so. He said, he thought we came to catch them. We asked him, wherein? But he refused to answer, or to say any more to us. We desired to know what answer we should return to them which sent us. He said he would give none. Whereupon we did exhort them to search the scriptures, and to consider from whence they were fallen, and repent: and so we departed from them." He yet continued his speech, saying: "Brethren,—Afterwards, upon the three and twentieth day of this present month, upon the desire of brother Cranfield, I went to Over, being accompanied with our brother Marriatt, bro. Browne, bro. Peverill. And after some words of exhortation were spoken to the people, sister Binnes being there present, we asked of her the reason why she had departed from the ordinances of God, and why she absented herself from the people of God. She said, she did not. We told her that she denied baptism; and our bro. Marriatt told her, that she did deny it when bro. Cox and he were with her. Yet she denied, and said she did not. We then told her that she had a great while dissembled with the congregation; for, formerly, she had confessed it to be an evil to go and hear the priest, and that in the presence of the congregation; but since had made a mock at it. She said, she did not confess it to be an evil. We affirmed that she did. She said, that if it were a sin she did confess it; but she did not think she had sinned. Then we reproved her for her dissimulation, and departing from the ways and commandments of the Lord, and desired [her] to consider what she had done: for she had both despised the ordinances of God, and rejected the admonition of the servants of God. And many more words we used by way of exhortation; but all would not work, for she grew more stubborn. After which, we told her she had been

several times admonished for her departing from the ways of God; but she refused to hearken, and was grown dead and unprofitable. Wherefore we did, in the name of Jesus Christ, deliver her unto Satan, to whom she had yielded herself a servant. After which she did, in a very angry manner, declare against us, saying we were none of the people of God. And as for Satan, she knew [him] not, unless we brought him with us; for she believed we had delivered her from Satan. We asked her, why she did not say this to us before. She said, if we had not meddled with her, she had said nothing to us."

After this, the premises being taken into consideration, John Denne and Edmond Mayle were appointed to go to Sutton, Somersham, and Chatteris, to reprove those persons that were turned aside, and if they remained obstinate to excommunicate them.

Afterwards John Denne spake as followeth: "Brethren, —There was an order, made by the general consent of the congregation, at a general meeting held at Fenystanton (see p. 98.). First, That it shall be lawful only for such persons as are approved of by the congregation, to preach publicly to to the world. Secondly, That it shall not be lawful for any person to make it their sole business to go from the congregation to preach, except they be sent by the congregation.

"Contrary to both these articles (as I suppose) have been the actions of our brother, Thomas Bedford; but I am sure they have been contrary to the last. For, upon the seventeenth day of the tenth month, he went to Stow, without any commission from the congregation, and there preached publicly. For which thing, it being contrary to the order of the congregation, and likewise contrary to the holy scripture, which saith: *How can they preach except they be sent?* I did reprove him, after I had heard thereof, and did earnestly desire him to desist from the like for the future. Yet, notwith-

standing, upon the one and thirtieth day of the tenth month, he went again to the same place, being accompanied with our brother John Blowes, and there they preached publicly, without giving the congregation the least notice thereof. For which thing our brother Mayle and myself did sharply reprove Thomas Bedford; but he refused to hearken to us, making his appeal to this meeting, at which time he said brother Blowes and he would make good what they had done.

"Afterwards I did reprove John Blowes for the same thing; but he would not hear, but stood to maintain their actions, and likewise made his appeal to this meeting. At which time he said he would give in his mind in writing; but I told him he might spare that labour, for I hoped he would be present, and then he might do it by word of mouth.

"Now, brethren, they have made their appeals to you, and they are both here present; and therefore I beseech you, take this into your serious consideration,"

Whereupon the congregation, taking this thing into their serious consideration, the order was produced and read (p. 98.) for the satisfaction of all. After which it was generally adjudged that they had sinned greatly, both in breaking the order of the congregation, and in despising and contemning reproof. And therefore they were sharply reproved; but for the present they remained obstinate, and stood to maintain their actions. For the which purpose John Blowes produced, and read in the congregation, a large paper of arguments and questions; which was taken into consideration, and every part thereof so answered, that satisfaction was given to all, and their mouths so stopped that they confessed their sin, and promised not to do the like again. After this, upon the occasion of this thing and many others, this question was propounded: viz., whether it was not the duty of

every member (unless prevented by sickness or some other extraordinary occasion), to be present at the assembly of the congregation, upon the first day of the week?

This question was taken into consideration, and found agreeable to the holy scripture. Whereupon this ensuing order was made by the general consent of the congregation: viz., that if any members of the congregation shall absent themselves from the assembly of the same congregation upon the first day of the week, without manifesting a sufficient cause, they shall be looked upon as offenders and [be] proceeded against accordingly.

After this, it was desired, that if any member should at any time have any extraordinary occasion to hinder them from the assembly, that they would certify the congregation of the same beforehand, for the prevention of jealousies, &c.

After this, the congregation was informed, that our brother Lack, of Hemingford, was declining from the truth of God, to those people commonly called Quakers. Whereupon John Denne and Christop. Marriatt were appointed to go to him, and admonish him.

On the sixth day of the twelfth month, at a general meeting held at Cambridge, the elders of several congregations being present:—First, it was desired, that for the better attaining to, and retaining of, unity and order in the churches, that we should unite ourselves together into a strong combination, to meet often together (howsoever the elders of the respective congregations), at such times and place as should be thought most convenient. This was taken into consideration, and many reasons produced to show the excellency thereof. And at length it was agreed unto. The place of our meeting was thought convenient to be at Cambridge. The next meeting was appointed to be upon the third day of the third month of the next year.

After this the letter which we received from Melbourne was read, and taken in consideration (see page 113). But our bro. Gray being absent, our bro. Rich. Metcalfe and Ben. Metcalfe were appointed to certify him, that the congregation assembled at Cambridge did desire him to be present at the next meeting, to be held there upon the third day of the third month, 1655, to answer to those things which would be laid to his charge.

ANNO DOMINI, 1655.

On the eleventh day of the first month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and a word of exhortation, a letter was read which came from Wisbeach, which was as followeth:—

To the church of God at Fenystanton and Caxton, your faithful brother John Milles, one of the unworthiest members of the church at Wisbeach, sendeth greeting.

Whereas God, through his abundant love, hath been pleased to let his light appear unto us who were in darkness, and in such a measure that it prevailed with our hearts to yield up ourselves to be servants unto him, it is meet therefore that we first consider the end of God's love, as the apostle Paul, in the 1st Thess. iv. 1, beseecheth the brethren, and exhorts them by the Lord, that as God hath been pleased to show unto them, by his servants and messengers, how they ought to walk and to please God, that they would abound more and more. And he gives his reason in the seventh verse; *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness.* And in the two last verses of the second chapter of the second epistle, he prayeth to us: *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father (who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,) comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.*

Secondly, We are to consider our duty. And that is not to put our candle under a bushel but in a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house—that so all the household may receive light and comfort. For if we light a candle and keep it to ourselves, and do not make speed to call our fellow servants to show it unto them, there can be little union in that house, or that family. Yea, love must needs be wanting, if they do not all partake [of] that we do. Besides, the apostle saith, *What fellowship hath light with darkness?* And David saith, that it is a happy thing for brethren to dwell together in unity. Therefore I desire we may remember what Paul saith to the Corinthians: *What I have received of the Lord, that declare I unto you.* And again: *I have not kept back anything that was profitable for you.* And again: *I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.* Also we see in the 8th chapter of the Acts, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem hear that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. There was no delay. They did not tarry till Samaria sent for them; but they sent their messengers to Samaria with speed, that so the work of the Lord might go forward, that so the house of the Lord might be raised, that it might seem beautiful in the eyes of the world—as that it will do, if the saints follow on to know the Lord and his commandments, and walk therein.

Now, dearly beloved brethren, whereas I, when I was last with you, did promise you to send a letter to certify you how our friends stand affected to the 4th principle of the doctrine of God—I do now in the name of the Lord beseech you (in the behalf of those whose hearts are drawn forth to obey God in that principle of laying on of hands) not to be negligent in the work of the Lord; but send unto us faithful messengers to do his work, and administer his ordinances to those amongst us whose hearts are free, and ready to em-

brace the truth, as the Lord is pleased to bring it to their remembrance; that so we may with one heart and one mind wait upon the Lord, desiring more knowledge of his ways; that so he may take delight in us to do us good, and ever be satisfying us with his Spirit. For, as Hosea saith, chap. vi. ver. 3, *If we follow on to know the Lord, then shall we know that his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the former and latter rain upon the earth.*

I would have you come so as to be with us at our next general meeting. It will be upon the 11th day of March next. And in the mean time I shall (God willing) be stirring the brethren up, and putting them in remembrance of the ways and commandments of our God, according to the measure of that light which God hath been pleased to communicate unto me, not doubting but that God is able and willing to protect those who out of generosity of heart strive to advance his glory. Yet, truly, I find that deferring of time doth many times bring a deadness and coldness upon the spirits of some men; if it had not, you had heard from me before this time. But I have had much ado with some; but I hope it will work together for good. But I must leave for the present, only desiring the Lord to direct all our hearts, and to keep us close unto himself, until the appearing of Jesus; and to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I pray let me hear from you as soon as you can, that so I may acquaint them that they may not be in doubt of your coming.

Your brother in the Lord,

JOHN MILLES.

From Wisbeach, Feb. 20th, 1654.

This letter being read was taken into consideration; and although the desire of our brother could not be granted, in respect of the time which he desired us to send to him, this being the day, yet it was thought necessary that we should send unto them. And accordingly, Edmond Mayle and John Denne were appointed to go unto them. After this, John Denne stood up and spake as followeth:—"Brethren, upon the eighth day of this present month, according to your order (see p. 124), my brother Mayle and myself did go to Sutton, to Philip Eppings; and speaking to him, desired him to go to the house of his brother William Eppings, which accordingly he did. And finding him and his wife at home, we declared unto him that the congregation, taking notice of their departure from the truth, together with their contemning the reproof and admonition of their messengers (p. 121), thought it necessary to send us unto them once more, to admonish them of their guilt, if peradventure they might be brought unto repentance. Wherefore, in the name of the Lord, we did reprove them, and exhorted them by the Lord Jesus to consider from whence they were fallen and repent. They answered that they were not fallen from the truth, the truth they owned; but we were carnal, and those ordinances which we do practise were too low for them, they were nothing to them. And many other words did they use, contemning the ordinances of God, and despising his holy scriptures. For which lying words we did sharply reprove them; but they altogether slighted our reproof. Wherefore we, taking into our consideration their heinous crimes which they had committed:—

First, In forsaking the assembly of the saints;

Secondly, Despising of the holy scriptures;

Thirdly, Denying of the ordinances of God;

Fourthly, Despising and contemning all the reproof and admonition of the church: and finding no hope of recovery, we excommunicated them.

Afterwards we went to Chatteris, and entering into the house of William Custons, we sent for John Dring and Thomas Rosse. And when they were come, we told them that the congregation being informed of their departure from the truth of God, and their despising and contemning our reproof (see p. 115), thought it meet to send us unto them again (see p. 124). Wherefore, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and his people, we did sharply reprove them for their sin, and exhorted them greatly to repent, and to break off their sins by righteousness, if peradventure the thoughts of their hearts and the words of their mouths might be forgiven. But Thomas Rosse cried out with a loud voice; "Baptism we disown; preaching we disown; we disown you all, with the ordinances which you practise." We, being something amazed at this rash speech, kept silent; yet, being zealous for the honour of our God, [we] began to vindicate his ordinances. But they being all of one mind refused to hearken; but uttered more words against the holy scriptures, despising them, and denying the doctrine of the gospel, affirming it to be the doctrine of the devil; denying the ordinances of God; and denying the church of God; and likewise despising and contemning all their reproof. Which things we taking into our serious consideration, and perceiving no hope of repentance, we excommunicated them.

And being parted from them, we went to the house of our brother Paul Robinson, of whom we inquired concerning the estate of the rest of the brethren. And he declared unto us that Mercy Read, a member of the congregation, was departed from the truth; but the rest remained steadfast. Whereupon we sent for the brethren, and declared unto them how far we had proceeded against the forementioned persons, and exhorted them to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering.

But we had not been long together before William Custons

came in amongst us, crying, "For shame! leave off your hypocrisy; for shame! leave off your deceiving the people." We demanded what he had to accuse us of? He answered, "You deliver men to Satan; and the apostles of Christ never delivered any to Satan, unless it were for fornication." Whereupon he read the 11th verse of the 5th chapter of the 1st Epistle of Corinthians; and then he said, "You cannot accuse us for these things." Then we asked, whether he read only of those persons that were delivered unto Satan? He answered, "Yea;" and thereupon read the 19th and 20th verses of the 1st chapter of the first Epistle written to Timothy; the words are as followeth:—*Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.* Whereupon we replied, saying:—"Thou hast read the cause of thy condemnation; for thou art delivered unto Satan for the same things, even for making shipwreck of faith and putting away a good conscience. Wherefore, from henceforth, keep silent; out of thy own mouth thou art judged and condemned." Then he said no more to this; but farther affirmed that we were deceivers, in that we exhorted men to search the scriptures, when Christ exhorts to no such thing, but rather blames them, saying;—"Ye search the scriptures, and in them ye think to have eternal life." Whereupon we charged him in the presence of God to keep silent, and not to wrest the holy scripture, adding to them and diminishing from them at his pleasure. And likewise we read the scripture, wherein his wresting thereof was discovered to all that were present. Whereupon he was greatly abashed, and so departed from us. Thus was the Lord pleased to discover his folly, making him to go away ashamed. Then, after we had prayed, the brethren departed; and we remained there that night. On the next morning

being accompanied with our brother Robinson, we went to Mercy Read, and declared to her that we heard she had forsaken the truth of God (see p. 131), and therefore we came unto her to know whether it was so or no. She answered "No," she hoped she had not forsaken the truth, for she believed she was nigher the truth than ever she was before. We told her we should be glad thereof, if it did appear to be true; but we desired her to deal plainly with us, and to tell us in few words whether or no she owned the scriptures as a rule to walk by; and whether she owned those ordinances of Christ as formerly she did; as baptism, breaking of bread, &c. She answered, that she looked upon those to be carnal, and believed that she was nigher the truth of God than she was when she owned them. Whereupon, perceiving that she was of the self-same mind with the forementioned persons, denying the holy scriptures, and despising the ordinances of God, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we did reprove her, earnestly exhorting of her to consider from whence she was fallen and repent. Likewise by the holy scriptures we did admonish her of her dangerous estate, if she persisted in her ways. But we could not perceive that she regarded our words. Whereupon we left her; and in our journey homewards came to Somersham, and spake with —— Barnard, whom we found in the same condition with those persons of Chatteris, denying the holy scriptures, denying the ordinances of God, and denying the church of God. Whereupon, according to our duties, we did in the name of Jesus Christ reprove him; admonishing him of his dangerous estate; and exhorted him by the Lord Jesus, to consider from whence he was fallen, and to repent of his evil, if, peradventure, his sins might be forgiven. Hearing our reproofs, admonition, and exhortation, he promised us seriously to consider of what we said. So we left him, hoping that upon consideration our words might work upon him.

The congregation hearing this relation were satisfied with the proceedings, and moreover appointed John Denne and Edmond Mayle to go again to Mercy Read of Chatteris, and to —— Barnard of Somersham, to see their condition, and if they persisted in their evil, to excommunicate them.

After this John Denne spake again as followeth: "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint our brother Marriat and myself to go to our brother Lack, of Hemingford, to see whether he was declined from the truth and to admonish him. According to your appointment we went to him, and inquiring into his estate he voluntarily confessed his evil, declared his resolution for the time to come to continue steadfast in the ways of God; whereupon we declared our joyfulness, and likewise exhorted him by the holy scriptures to hold fast the profession of his faith." The congregation hearing this accepted thereof.

After this a letter was read which came from Canterbury, which was as followeth:—

The church of God in and about Canterbury, to our dearly beloved brethren in the faith and order of the gospel, congregated together in and about Caxton and Fenystanton, wish grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, we are bound to bless God on your behalf, and also we do acknowledge ourselves much engaged to you for your great love and care of us, which you have expressed at this time in sending to us our beloved brother Denne to supply our great want. Brethren, we doubt not but God who stirred up your hearts to sympathize with and to supply our wants will graciously reward you, and continually supply your wants through Jesus Christ; we trust that the Lord will make him an instrument of much good unto us, and we

entreat you, brethren, that, since the Lord hath been pleased to make you instruments of good unto us by answering our desires in this particular, that you would remember both him and us in your prayers, that God would fill him with all knowledge and utterance that he may be amongst us an instrument to bring honour to the name of our God and much good to ourselves. He is provided of an house, and we doubt not of a comfortable being and subsistence amongst us.

Thus, brethren, we commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified; and we remain,

Your brethren in the faith and order of the gospel,

THO. JARMAN, JOHN SMITH,
DANIEL JARMAN, JOHN REIGNOLDS,
WILL. RUSSELL, THEOPHILUS HAISE.
JO. WIGMORE,

Signed in the name and by the appointment of the whole church.

Canterbury, the 19th day of
the 12th month, 1654.

On the two and twentieth day of the second month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication and some words of exhortation, a letter was read which came from Wesbey [Westby], which was as followeth :—

To the church of God at Fenystanton, Caxton, and the parts adjacent, the church of God at Easton, Welbey, and Wesbey, sendeth greeting, in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory always.

Dear friends and Christian brethren,—It is the desire of

our hearts and souls that we may all be knit together in love, and that we may all be of one mind, speaking all the same thing, that so there may be no divisions amongst us, to the grieving the hearts of some and staggering the faith of others, and also a cause to make the enemies of the truth to rejoice; but so it is that there is a breach amongst us, and also a separation from communion in the ordinances of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by some of our friends, who do not break bread with us in remembrance of Christ, because we are not as yet persuaded to believe, that the right manner of the administration of that ordinance is to have a supper immediately before breaking of bread. The which difference among us, is a cause of much trouble and sadness of spirit to many amongst us; and, therefore, we are willing to use all means which we conceive may put a happy end to these differences. And hearing that you do believe and practise that manner of administration of that ordinance, in breaking bread after supper, and believing that what you do herein you have some true or supposed ground for from the scripture; and also believing that what light you have received, either in this or any other practice which you hold for the worship of God, you will communicate the same for the further enlightening and strengthening of your brethren: in confidence hereof we have sent unto you this our epistle, to entreat you to send our brother Denne, the elder, and whom else you please, to see if God will be pleased by them sweetly to unite us together in the right manner of the administration of his ordinances, and we shall be all ready to hear and obey any truth as it is in Jesus.

And in the meantime, we desire that both you and we may earnestly seek to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he would give us more of the Spirit of truth, that we may be led into all truth; and that we may all walk in love, even as Christ hath loved us; that we

may all be preserved blameless, till the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, we salute you all in the Lord, and bid you heartily farewell.

JOHN ALLEIN, Pastor.
WILLIAM EVERT, Elder.

JOHN BULLIMER, HENRY HITCHCOCK,
WILL. PRIDGIN, ROBT. COX,
WILL. BULLIMER.

This letter being read, and the desires of our brethren taken into consideration, it was ordered that a letter should be sent unto them, to certify them that our bro. Denne, the elder, was not with us; wherefore we could not satisfy their desires. After this, John Denne stood up, and spake as followeth:—

"Brethren, upon the eighth day of this instant month, according to your order (see p. 134), our brother Mayle and myself went to Somersham, to —— Barnard (who was formerly admonished by us (see p. 134) for departing from the truth), and speaking with him we desired to know whether he had considered of our words, according to his promise. He answered he had. Then we demanded, whether he was willing to walk in the observation of the ordinances of God as formerly, and to confess his evil in despising of them. He answered, all ordinances were nothing to him, he looked upon them to be low and carnal; and it was the duty of every one to look within, and not at any outward ordinances. Whereupon we did vindicate the ordinances of God by the holy scriptures, and likewise reproved him sharply for his sin, and admonishing him of the danger that he was in if he did not repent. But our words took no impression; neither did he regard them. Wherefore, taking into our consideration his heinous crimes; viz.:—

First, His forsaking the church of God;

Secondly, Denying the holy ordinances;

Thirdly, Denying and despising the ordinances of God;

Fourthly, Denying the church, and despising and contemning all their reproof and admonition; and also [considering] the words of the scripture, saying, *A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject*, Titus iii. 10: we excommunicated him.

After which, we went the same day, according to your order (see p. 134), to Chatteris, to Mercy Read, who was formerly admonished by us. And speaking with her, we desired to know whether she had considered of our words, and was willing to walk in the observation of the ordinances of God as formerly she did. But she was so far from any willingness, that she uttered many words in contempt of the ordinances of God. Wherefore we did sharply reprove her, admonishing her of her dangerous condition; but she regarded not our words. Wherefore, taking into our consideration her grievous crimes; viz.:—

First, Forsaking the church of God;

Secondly, Denying the holy scriptures;

Thirdly, Denying the ordinances of God;

Fourthly, Denying the church of God, and despising all their reproof and admonition: we excommunicated her.

After which, to fulfil your order, we went the same day to Wisbeach, where we were joyfully received by the brethren. The next day we went to the assembly of the congregation; where, after we had prayed, we were desired by the brethren to speak a word of exhortation, which accordingly we did. After which, we had some discourse concerning the doctrine of laying on of hands, which was mightily opposed by our brother Tayler, who laboured mightily to overthrow it. But it pleased God wonderfully to appear with us, and to carry

on his own truth, insomuch that his mouth was stopped. And not only so, but many others [were] convinced; insomuch that about thirteen were obedient thereunto. After which it was desired by our brethren that we would hear a difference between John Milles and the congregation. We told [them] that if they were pleased to repeat it before us, we would give our advice. Whereupon the business was related, and through the goodness of God a happy reconciliation procured. After this we returned thanks to God, and so parted that night.

The next morning the brethren came together; at which time one more was obedient to laying on of hands. After which, when we had prayed and [were] ready to depart homewards, the brethren declared to us that they had much business wherein they desired our assistance. Wherefore, they did earnestly desire us to promise them to come again. We answered, that we could say neither good nor bad; but what the congregation should say. Wherefore they greatly desired us to acquaint you with their desires; which accordingly I have done at this time, so as you may do herein as seemeth good unto you. The day which they did desire us to come upon, is the thirteenth day of the third month.

After this, upon the eleventh day of this month, we went to Royston, and visited our friends there. After which we went to Jesper Docraw, of Basingbourn, and after some salutations we began to reprove him for his dissimulation, which appeared from time to time in his breach of promise (see page 100) with the congregation. But we no sooner spake unto him, but he trembled exceedingly, and told us that his man ran away from him, and therefore he could not come. Likewise, he earnestly desired us to have patience with him, and he would, without fail, come unto us at the beginning of the fifth month. For the confirmation of which promise he

gave unto us his hand. Wherefore we desired him to take heed that he did not break his promise, as he had done formerly. He said he would not. Whereupon, after some exhortation, we parted from him.

The congregation hearing this relation accepted thereof, and resolved to wait upon Jesper Docraw. Also, taking the desires of our brethren of Wisbeach into consideration, they appointed Edmond Mayle and John Denne to go unto them, according to their desires. After this the congregation was certified by Tho. Peirson (a member of the church), that it was the earnest desire of our brethren at Peterborough, that we should send down to them, for they were convinced of the doctrine of laying on of hands, but wanted an administrator. After which, Edmond confirmed his words, and likewise declared that he should [have] acquainted the congregation of the same thing long before, but only he had forgotten it. Then the congregation being sorry it remained so long, ordered that John Denne and Edmond Mayle should go unto them. Whereupon, brother Peirson was desired to certify them, that the aforesaid persons would be with them upon the tenth day of the third month.

On the third day of the third month, according to a former agreement (see page 127), the elders of several congregations met at Cambridge. Where, after supplication to the most high God, brother Gray being present according to the desire of the congregation, those things wherewith he was charged by our brethren at Melbourne and Royston (see page 113), were declared to him, and a reason was demanded of him for those his actions. But he could not give any sufficient reason; wherefore he was sharply reproved, and exhorted to repent. Which exhortation he promised seriously to consider of; whereupon, the business was referred until another time.

After this, the assembly was certified that Samuel and

Ezekiel Cater, elders of the congregation of Littleport, with many others, members of the same congregation, were turned aside after the people commonly called Quakers:—denying the holy scriptures; denying the ordinances of God; denying the church of God. It was also certified, they had been often reproved for these things; but they slighted all reproof. Whereupon the assembly were very much grieved for this great breach; especially they being persons of such eminency in the church. Yet it was thought requisite, that judgment and justice should be executed according to the will of God. Whereupon John Ray and John Tabram, elders in the church, were appointed to go unto them, and to reprove them in the name of our Lord Jesus, and the whole assembly; and if they did not repent, to degrade the forementioned persons from their eldership, and afterwards to excommunicate them.[2]

It was likewise ordered, that they should certify the several congregations of their proceedings, and thus the meeting was dismissed.

The next meeting was appointed to be upon the two and twentieth day of the fourth month.

On the third day of the fourth month, at a general meeting of the congregation, held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication, and some words of exhortation, John Denne stood up and spake, saying; "Brethren, you were pleased the last meeting to appoint our bro. Mayle and myself to go

[2] [A petition was at this time presented to the Protector and the Parliament from the West Riding, in which the principles of the Quakers are said to be "to overturn magistracy, ministry, ordinances, all that which good men would keep up by their prayers and endeavours. The approved ministers of the nation they deny to be ministers of Christ. The ordinances . . . . are things in their account, which rose out of the bottomless pit; sermons, the invention of fallen men, and mere traditions."—Burton's Diary, iv. 442.]

to Peterborough and Wisbeach (see p. 140). According to your order, we went upon the ninth day of the third month to Peterborough, where we were joyfully received by the brethren. The next day the brethren met together, and after we had prayed to the Lord, we had much conference about the doctrine of laying on of hands. The brethren were generally convinced, and about fourteen were obedient thereunto, after which the assembly was dismissed. And the same night, being accompanied with many of the brethren, we went to Eye, to our brother Robt. Wright's house. And by the way, the brethren informed us that Robt. Wright preached this doctrine, viz.: that believers ought not to pray for the pardon of sin. And likewise they desired us to speak of it to him, and to reprove him for it. Which accordingly we did; and had much conference about the same thing, insomuch that his mouth was stopped, that he had nothing to say for the confirmation of it. Yet, nevertheless, he persisted in his opinion. Wherefore we desired him seriously to consider of our words, and to take heed of such a dangerous judgment.[3]

"The next day we intended to have went to Wisbeach: but I being sent for back again by your order, as you know very well, our brother Mayle only went forwards. Wherefore I must leave the rest of the relation unto him." Whereupon Edmond Mayle spake, saying, "Brethren, our brother Denne being sent for back by you, I went forwards the same day to Wisbeach. The next day, the brethren being assembled, I declared to them, that according to their desires (see p. 139),

[3] [Mr. Wright was subsequently excluded from the communion of the Baptist churches for immorality. He then conformed, and was admitted by the Bishop of Lincoln to a benefice. Much was expected from his proselyting zeal and bitter assaults on his former opinions. He was challenged by the eminent Thomas Grantham to prove his statements, but did not venture on the attempt. —Crosby, ii. 242.]

you had sent our bro. Denne and myself unto them, and that our bro. Denne was come part of the way; but only he was sent for back again, upon an occasion which happened after our coming forth from home. Whereupon the brethren being satisfied therewith, desired me to speak a word of exhortation, which accordingly I did. There were present at this meeting, John Lupton and Joseph Wright, members of the congregation in Lincolnshire, who likewise spake unto the people after me. Wherein they declared that those that were under laying on of hands, ought to separate themselves from those that were not under it, and have no communion with them. About this we had much conference; yet it was received by some of the brethren, and rejected by others, so that this unexpected difference put, for the present, a stop to the business intended.[4] Whereupon, the next day I returned home, leaving the forementioned persons there."

The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied with the proceedings.

After this, the congregation were informed that Joan Parker, that was servant to our sister Smith, of Hollywell, was run away from her service, not making either her master or dame acquainted therewith. Whereupon the congregation, abhorring all such actions, ordered that Tho. Cox and Thomas Phillips should go to her, and sharply reprove her for it; exhorting her to come and show the cause why she committed such an action, and to give satisfaction to her master.

After this a letter was read which came from Cambridge;

[4] [According to D'Anvers, the practice of laying on of hands was first introduced in 1645 by Francis Cornwell. During the Protectorate it spread rapidly, in various parts of the kingdom. In 1659 it was defended by W. Jeffery in Kent; and in 1660 was inserted in the Confession of Faith presented to King Charles II. In 1672 the churches in Bucks and the neighbouring counties introduced it into their creed, and it was held by most of the Lincolnshire baptists. It had also been adopted in London. —Taylor, Hist. of Gen. Bap. i. 411.]

which letter was sent thither by our bro. Ray, to certify them and the rest of the congregation of their proceedings at Littleport, according to former order (see p. 141).

The letter was as follows, viz.:—

For Arthur Hindes at Cambridge.

Well-beloved in Christ:

According to the order and determination of the church, assembled at your house the third day of May last past, brother Tabram and myself did go unto Littleport on the day following, where we heard that the Quakers were then assembled together in an orchard. So immediately we determined to go unto them; and when we came there, we found them (especially Samuel and Ezekiel Cater) in the same condition, or rather worse. Upon which, I immediately made my speech in the audience of them all, declaring that I was sent with brother Tabram, from the general assembly of the elders and brethren of the church of Christ at Cambridge, assembled the third day of May last; who did, after mature consideration, determine that we should come both to degrade and excommunicate those two apostates, Samuel and Ezekiel Cater, formerly members of the church at Littleport. So after that I had done it, and charged all good people, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, likewise to disown them, so far as to have nothing to do with them at all, neither to receive them into their houses; nor yet to use the common salutation which we may use to others, in bidding them God speed; nor yet to entertain any discourse or disputation with them; but to shun them, and all such profane and vain babblers and babbling, because their words will eat as doth a canker, and increase unto more ungodliness, and therefore much rather to be shunned than reasoned with. I say, after this was done, we presently went to the common meeting place of the town, and with the unanimous consent of the

townspeople, we entered in. And after the greatest part of the town were come together, I declared unto them all publicly for what purpose I was come then to the town, and by whom I was sent. And after a full declaration thereof, I took a text of scripture, and preached to them Jesus, both in his person and ordinances, vindicating both them, and also the holy scriptures, from those wicked whimsies and nonsensical interpretations which the Quakers put on them. In which work, I praise the Lord, I found great assistance and help; all which was received by the townspeople with great joy and approbation, being exceeding glad, both to hear that we did not allow of the rude and sordid doings of those apostates, and also that we stuck close to the holy scriptures and the doctrine of Christ. And it is generally believed amongst our friends that it will engender much good, and the hearts of people are more towards us than formerly. But before we had done at the common meeting place, all the Quakers came in thither, against whom I do resolve not to reason with them, they being so unreasonable. Yet when I had done, one of them did rail on me in such a foolish, rude, and frothy manner, that I turned away without answering thereto, lest I should be like him. At which, although they boasted and derided, yet all sober and good people approved it.[5]

The next day, being Saturday, we had another meeting in

[5] [The journal of George Fox is full of such entries as the following: "On the first day I was moved to go into the steeple house, where the priest had got another priest to help him; and a many professors and contenders were got together. But the Lord's power was over all, and the priests fled away, and a great deal of good service I had for the Lord amongst the people." "In the afternoon I went to the steeple house at Lancaster, and declared the truth both to the priest and people; laying open before them the deceits they lived in, and directing them to the power and Spirit of God, which they wanted. But they haled me out, and stoned me along the street"—the natural effect of these unseemly interruptions.—Journal, i. 151, 171.]

private, it being desired by some townspeople as well as brethren. And while I was preaching to them, the Quakers thrust in at the doors, so many as could, although we had told their messenger, which they sent an hour before, that they should have no leave to come to the house, neither would we talk with them, so that their impudence is beyond measure. But I ceased to speak farther until we had got them out of the house again, which we had much ado to effect.

After this we came to Streatham, where we continued the sixth day of the week, preaching the very same things publicly, in a great barn, with the approbation of many people, amongst whom some desired to be baptized. I thought meet to acquaint you with these things that you may know what is done, and chiefly that you may acquaint all our friends with the same, that you all may give glory to God, and warn all to observe our censure against these men, in not receiving them. So, with my Christian respects to yourself and your wife, and all our friends,

I remain, your assured friend,

Mar. 13th, 1655. JOHN RAY.

There was also enclosed in this letter a list of the names, both of those that stand fast in the faith, and of those that are turned aside from the faith in Littleport; which was as followeth, viz.:

A note of the names of those of the church that are turned Quakers at Littleport. Samuel and Ezekiel Cater, elders; these are both degraded and excommunicated. The wives of the forementioned persons. Richard Smith, deacon; with his wife. William Hardiman, with his wife. William Cater, with his wife. William Easy. Elizabeth Asplin. In all twelve.

A note of the names of those that stand fast. Brother Toppin,

with his wife. Brother Cooke, with his wife. Brother Punt, with his wife. Brother Asplin, with his wife. Brother Tingey, with his wife. Brother Lambe, with his wife. Brother Nobbs, with his wife. Sister Rayner; sister Gunton; sister Alderton; sister Crabb; sister Stokes; sister Finch. Brother Bowton. In all one and twenty.

This list, together with the letter, being read in the congregation, they were sent from us to Royston.

After this, brother Cranfield of Over, did earnestly desire, in the behalf of many people in that town, that our bro. Denne should come over thither to preach publicly. Which thing the congregation taking into consideration, and perceiving that it might redound to the honour of God, they condescended to his request, and appointed our bro. Denne to go thither to preach.

These things being done, praise was offered unto the Lord, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the two and twentieth day of the fourth month, according to former order, the elders of several congregations met at Cambridge. At which meeting, after prayer and supplication to the Most High, this question was propounded, viz.; Whether or no it it is lawful for any member of the congregation, to marry with any without the congregation? Upon this question there was very much debate; but at length it was resolved, that it is not lawful for any member of the congregation to be married unto one without the congregation. Likewise it was resolved, that all persons offending in this case shall be sharply reproved, according to the rule of the scriptures against sinners, and if they refuse to hear they shall be excommunicated. After this, prayer was rendered to God, and so the assembly was dismissed. The next meeting was appointed to be upon the eight and twentieth day of the seventh month.

On the fifteenth day of the fifth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the most high God and some words of exhortation, the congregation was certified that a messenger was come from Peterborough, in the behalf of that congregation, to certify us how greatly they were troubled with the erroneous doctrine of Robert Wright (see page 142); and likewise they earnestly, in the name of Jesus Christ, desired some aid and assistance from us. Which thing, the congregation taking into consideration, and being willing to promote the honour of God, they appointed John Denne and Edmond Mayle to go over to them. After this, Tho. Coxe spake as followeth: "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint our brother Phillips and myself to go to our sister Parker, to exhort her to come to the congregation to give satisfaction for her sin (see page 143). And accordingly we intended to have went to her father's house to have spoken with her; but we hearing accidentally that she lived with the miller of Papworth Annes,[6] we went thither to speak with her. But she accidentally espying us, went out of the way, so that we could not speak with her. Whereupon we went again, at another time, and found her at home. But she refused to speak with us, or to give any account of her former disorder. Her master also refused to suffer us to come into the house."

The congregation hearing this relation, it was adjudged a heinous sin in her; but nothing further was resolved at this time concerning her. After this, John Denne spake as followeth: "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint me to go to Over to preach publicly (see page 147). And accordingly I went and preached there, being accompanied with many of the brethren. And after exercise was done, we being toge-

[6] [Papworth St. Agnes.]

ther with brother Cranfield of the same town, and considering the condition of our sister Sneesby as it was declared by our brother Coxe (see page 120), inquired concerning her. Whereupon it was declared to us, that she was turned aside from the truth. Whereupon our brother Mayle and myself went to her. And after some salutations, we began to inquire into her estate; which truly we found to be very desperate, she being turned aside from the truth, denying the holy scriptures, the ordinances of God, and the church of God. For which things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we did sharply reprove her, showing unto her the evil of her ways; but she refused to hearken. Whereupon, in the name of Jesus Christ, we did excommunicate her."

After this, John Denne spake again as followeth:—"Brethren, I think it requisite to declare at this time the proceedings with John Matthews, which proceedings, although they are partly known to some of you, yet for the satisfaction of all, I shall speak; and so much the rather, because he was a person of such eminency amongst us before his departure from us into Ireland, where he remained some time. But at length, coming over to visit his friends, we had thereby an occasion to speak with him. Which accordingly we did, and after some salutations we told him that we had heard that he had altered his judgment, and forsaken that truth which formerly he professed. He answered, yea, he had altered his judgment, and forsaken that which we profess, and was likewise formerly professed by himself; but it was not the truth, but error. We told him, that he had once owned it to be the truth; and not only owned it, but likewise preached it publicly to the world. At which time, the Spirit and power of God was so manifested in him, that none of the adversaries durst open their mouths to oppose, and therefore we demanded why he disowned it now. He answered, first, that it was true he did once both own it, and

preach it; at which time, he confessed, that the power of God was manifested in him to admiration; insomuch that not one of the adversaries durst open their mouths to oppose. Secondly, he answered, that the reason why he disowned it now, was because he was persuaded within himself that it was false. We replied, that out of his own mouth he should be judged; for he had confessed before us, that when he preached that which he now denieth, the spirit and power of God was mightily manifested in him, even to admiration; and if [it were] so that that was the Spirit of God, then this must needs be a false spirit that is contrary thereunto. He then answered, that he thought at that time it was the Spirit of God, as we do; but now he believed it to be a false spirit. We replied, that the effects did evidently prove it to be a true spirit, and likewise the scriptures would manifest the truth of the doctrine which he then preached. He answered, that the scriptures would manifest the contrary. Whereupon we entered into a large conference about the matters in controversy; until at length, he told us that it was in vain to multiply words about the matter, for he knew what we could say, he being once as ready as we to say the same things. Whereupon, we did, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, reprove him for his sin, exhorting him to consider from whence he was fallen, and repent and turn unto the Lord, if peradventure the thought of his heart may be forgiven him, But he refused to hearken to our words. Wherefore we exhorted him to consider what he did, and to beware of despising the reproof and admonition of the saints. And so we parted at that time.

The things affirmed by him contrary to the doctrine believed by us, and formerly preached by him, are as followeth, viz.: First, That Christ died only for his elect, even such as either do, or shall believe on him. Secondly, That God hath from the beginning chosen a certain number of persons to

himself, to which persons he cometh with such a compulsive power that they cannot resist. Thirdly, That God hath from the beginning pre-ordained a certain number of persons to condemnation, from which persons he withholdeth all manner of power, so that there is not any possibility of their believing. For which things, at another time, our bro. Mayle, accompanied with some of the brethren, did reprove him the second time; but he refused to hearken. Whereupon, the third time he was reproved and exhorted to repent by our brother Mayle and myself, in the presence of many of the brethren; but he refused to hearken unto us, persisting stubbornly in his opinion. Whereupon it was resolved, that the next first day the business should be declared in the presence of the congregation. It was likewise resolved, that I should come unto Fenystanton upon that day.

These resolutions were declared unto him, and he was desired to be present at the assembly of the congregation upon that day; he promised he would be present. Whereupon, the first day being come, I went to Fenystanton. And the congregation being assembled we went to prayer, after which a word of exhortation was spoken by our brother Mayle, and afterwards a word of exhortation was spoken by myself; yet all this time he came not. Wherefore we sent for him, but he came not at present; but at length he came to us; at which time we did reprove him for denying the faith which once he professed, and for labouring to destroy it in all places where he came. But he refused to hearken to us; whereupon we earnestly desired him to consider from whence he was fallen and repent; but he contemned all our words. Wherefore we desired to know whether he desired any further consideration upon the matter. He answered, no; he would not consider of it any more. Whereupon we, knowing how he denied the faith which formerly he professed, and also laboured to the utmost of his power to destroy it in all

places, and likewise despised and contemned all our words of reproof and admonition, and finding no hope of recovery but a stubborn persisting in his evil:—we delivered him unto Satan."

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation that the things that were reported of Roger Walkwood (see p. 109) were too true; and further that he aggravated his sin, by enticing a man's wife of St. Ives to go away with him, which thing being brought before the magistrate of the town, and proved before him, he was for that cause banished from the town, and not suffered to come within five miles; "so that we cannot find him to speak with him, according to your order." The congregation hearing this, entered into debate upon the business. And abhorring all such actions as appeared in him, it was resolved that, from henceforth, he was worthy to be excommunicated, and therefore we should have no communion with him.

After these things praise was rendered unto God, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the six and twentieth day of the sixth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of exhortation, a letter was read which came from the congregation of saints in Wisbeach, wherein they did earnestly desire (for many causes therein specified), that our brother, Edmond Mayle, and our brother, John Denne, should be sent over to them. Which thing the congregation taking into their consideration, and being willing to their utmost abilities to promote the honour of God, and to comfort his people, they did appoint John Denne and Edmond Mayle to go to Wisbeach.

After this, John Denne certified the congregation of their proceedings at Peterborough, as followeth, viz.: "Brethren,

you were pleased to appoint our brother Mayle and myself to go to Peterborough (see p. 148), to be assistant to our brethren there in the business of Robert Wright. Accordingly we did go, and coming thither accidentally we met with our brother Lambe[7] of London, which was much joy unto us, hoping that he would be some help unto us in the business, which also he was. The brethren being assembled, Robert Wright was expected to be there. But he was not, although he had notice beforehand of our coming, and likewise desired, both by us and the congregation there, to be present. Whereupon, in the first place, we prayed unto the Lord for wisdom and the spirit of discerning; after which it was declared by the brethren that Robt. Wright did believe that the Lord Jesus Christ by his death hath taken away all sin, whether past, present, or to come. 2. That believers ought not to pray for the pardon of any sin. Which doctrine he publicly preacheth, and persuadeth the brethren thereunto. For which things they had often reproved him, yet, nevertheless, he did persist therein; wherefore they desired our advice and counsel. Whereupon the matter was taken into serious consideration, and much conference we had about it (which is too tedious here to relate), insomuch that the brethren were all persuaded therefrom, and did testify by word of mouth their disowning of it. And likewise it was adjudged by all, according to the scriptures, to be a very dangerous and unsound doctrine. Whereupon it was thus resolved, by the consent of all, that, if Robt. Wright should, notwithstanding the reproof of the church, still persist in his

[7] [Mr. Lambe was pastor of the church meeting in Bell Alley, Coleman Street. During his ministry he was many times imprisoned for the truth, and on one occasion was dragged in chains from Colchester, to answer for his contumacy in the Star Chamber, before the tyrant Laud. He died at an advanced age in 1672. An enemy testifies that, "his congregation was by far the largest and most fruitful of all the Anabaptist churches." — Taylor's Hist. of Gen. Bapt. i. 98, 241.]

evil opinion, that then they should have no communion with him. This being resolved, prayer was rendered to God for our mutual agreement, after which we parted from them and returned home."

After this, John Denne certified the congregation that George Michel of Eltisley, and Jeremy Aldridge of Papworth Everard, having a long time absented the assembly of the congregation, contrary to the advice of the Holy Ghost, and given no sufficient reasons thereof, upon the last first day we did appoint John Brighden, and John Tayler, to go to George Michel, to reprove him for his sin, and to declare unto him, that it was the desire of the congregation that he should come to this general meeting, to give an account of his long absence from the assemblies of the church, and what else should be laid to his charge. We did also appoint John Tayler and Joseph Gilman to go unto Jeremy Aldridge with the same message. Whereupon John Tayler and John Brighden were called to declare what answer they received from George Michel. Whereupon they declared that they went to George Michel as they were appointed, and did reprove him for his sin. But he refused to hearken unto them. Therefore they declared to him the desire of the congregation, which he promised to fulfil; for he promised to be at this meeting, if it was a day meet for any man to travel in. But, howsoever, he would be at the assembly at Caxton Pastures, upon the first day of the next week. The congregation hearing this relation, did first adjudge it a great aggravation of his evil in despising reproof; secondly, his breach of promise was adjudged a heinous crime, and so much the rather because the day proved fair, so that it was not only meet to travel, but very pleasant. Yet notwithstanding, the congregation, to manifest their patience, resolved to wait upon him, to see if he would fulfil his promise in coming to Caxton Pastures. It was also ordered, that the

assembly at Caxton Pastures should proceed in the business (if he came thither), as if it had been at the general meeting. After this, John Tayler and Joseph Gilman were called to declare what answer they received from Jeremy Aldridge. But Jeremy Aldridge being himself present, and hearing thereof, voluntarily appeared and confessed his evil, promising not to do the like again. Whereupon the matter was passed by with satisfaction. After this prayer was rendered unto Almighty God, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the eight and twentieth day of the seventh month, according to former order (see p. 147,) the elders of several congregations met at Cambridge. Where, after prayer and supplication, a letter was read which came from the brethren of Warboys; wherein, after salutations, they did certify the assembly that they had chosen officers amongst themselves, both elders and deacons; and therefore they did earnestly desire that some might be sent over to them to ordain them, and to get in order things that are wanting.[8] This letter being read, these things were taken into serious consideration; and it was resolved, that Edward Mayle and John Denne, elders of the congregation belonging to Caxton and Fenystanton, in the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon, should go to Warboys, to ordain those officers which they had chosen amongst themselves, and to set in order those things which they should find to be wanting amongst them. This being done, several questions were propounded to be taken into consideration, which were as followeth, viz.: First, whether it is lawful, or according to order, for any members of the congregation to travel from place to place, without the consent of the congregation, and a certificate

[8] [See the Records of the Warboys church, *post.*]

thereof? Secondly, Whether it is not according to order, for every particular member to sit down with some congregation, to give an account to them of his actions? Thirdly, Whether it be not according to order, to [keep] a register in every congregation of the names of the members belonging thereto?

These questions were taken into consideration and at length concluded upon as followeth, viz. 1. That no member of the congregation whatsoever, shall travel from place to place, without the advice and consent of the congregation to whom he belongeth, which consent they shall testify by a certificate. 2. That every particular member shall sit down with some congregation, to give an account to them of his actions. 3. That there shall be a register, in every congregation, of the names of the members thereunto belonging. After these things, praise was rendered to God, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the seventh day of the eighth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Papworth Everard, after prayer and supplication to the Lord, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, Edmond Mayle spake as followeth: viz., "Brethren, according to your order (see p. 152), upon the two and twentieth day of the seventh month, our brother Denne and myself went to Wisbeach, where we were joyfully received by the brethren.

"The next day, being the first day of the week, the brethren did assemble together; and we being present with them, after we had prayed, they desired us to speak some words of exhortation, which accordingly we did. After which the brethren did certify us, that they were all convinced of the doctrine of laying on of hands; yea, even brother Tayler, who was so mightily against it when we were here before (see p. 138). They likewise desired us to administer it unto

them; which accordingly we did, praising and glorifying the name of the Lord for that he had wrought such unity that day.[9]

"After this, the congregation certified us that they had chosen officers amongst themselves, both elders and deacons, and they desired that they might be ordained by us. We demanded who they were that they had chosen? They then declared their names to us, Edmond Smith and Israel Cave were chosen elders. We then desired to know whether there had been a free election, according to the rule of the holy scripture, with the consent of the whole congregation? and we likewise desired that, if any person belonging to the congregation had anything to object against the persons nominated, they would freely speak and declare what they had to say. But there was not any that objected; but every one testified their free assent, according to their former election. Whereupon we prayed to the Lord for them, that he would endue them with wisdom, and in everything fit them for that work which he had called them unto. After which we ordained them by the ordinance of laying on of hands and prayer. Whereupon there was much joy in the congregation, and praise was rendered unto God, and so the assembly was dismissed. The next day, when we had prayed and taken our leave of the brethren, we returned home."

After this, Edmond Mayle continued his speech farther, saying: "Brethren, I hearing accidentally that Roger Walkwood was come again to St. Ives, I took our brother Richard

[9] [By Grantham the practice of laying on of hands is thus affirmed; "That as God hath promised to give the Holy Spirit to all that are called of the Lord, so he hath appointed a solemn way, wherein his servants and handmaids are to wait upon him for the reception thereof, which way is the prayers of the church, performed by her ministers or pastors with the laying on of hands, and this as a principle of Christ's doctrine, belonging to them in the minority of their Christian state."—Christ. Prim. Book ii. c. 3, p 31.]

Phillips along with me and went unto him. And speaking with him we told him that he had committed many abominable sins; as, 1. Absenting from the assembly of the saints; 2. Neglecting his calling and living in idleness; 3. Keeping evil company, as drunkards, and drinking with them excessively. And not only so, but he had aggravated his sins in breaking promise with the congregation, for he had before promised to amend his life and come to the church (see p. 109). Yet, notwithstanding, he did continue in the same things; and further committed another evil in enticing a man's wife to go away with him, which woman (her husband being now dead) he doth intend to take to wife, though she be not of the congregation but a very evil woman. For which things we did, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, reprove him, exhorting him to repent and turn unto the Lord. But we had nothing from him but idle excuses, as at former times; wherefore, considering the forementioned things, and how that he slighted all reproof, and likewise how the congregation at a general [meeting] had adjudged him to be excommunicated (p. 152), we did, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, pronounce the sentence of excommunication against him."

The congregation hearing this relation, accepted thereof.

After this it was certified unto the congregation by Richard Phillips, that Anne Woodward was intended to take a man to her husband that is not a member of the church of Christ. The congregation hearing thereof, demanded whether he did reprove her for it. He answered he did, but she refused to hearken. Whereupon it was resolved that Edmond Mayle and Christopher Marriatt should go unto her once more, to reprove her for her evil intention, and to admonish her of the danger that she would fall into if she did not desist.

After this the congregation was certified that George Michell had not been with the congregation, according to his promise (see p. 154); wherefore nothing was done concerning

him. The congregation hearing thereof, resolved that John Gilman and John Denne should go unto him, to reprove him for his sins, and if he remained obstinate, to excommunicate him. After this, the congregation was certified that Jeremy Aldridge had not been with the assembly of the church since the general meeting at Fenystanton, although he promised at that time to frequent the assemblies. The congregation hearing this, sent two unto him to reprove him for it, and to desire him to come to the congregation to give an account of his spending so long time. But he refused to come at that time; but promised that he would for the time to come. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to His name, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the eighteenth day of the ninth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, John Denne spake as followeth, viz.: "Brethren, We having found such underhand dealing from George Michell (as is evident by the breach of his several promises,) you were pleased to appoint our brother John Gilman and myself to go unto him to reprove him, and if he remained obstinate to excommunicate him. Whereupon, we being assembled at Eltisley, upon the eleventh day of this month, being the first day of the week, and knowing that he was at home, we thought it requisite to send for him to the assembly; and accordingly did send Joseph Gilman and Phillip Marshall unto him, to declare unto him that the congregation, being assembled in the town, did desire him to come unto them. But he refused to come, returning this answer, that he could not and would not come unto us. Whereupon we, being accompanied with some of the brethren, went to him; and speaking with

him, we asked why he refused to come unto us when we sent for him? He answered, that he had no business with us. Whereupon we told him, that we were come unto him, according to our duties, and the appointment of the church, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to reprove him for his heinous crimes which he had committed: in—

First, Forsaking the church of God;

Secondly, Running frequently upon the first day of the week, as well as at other times, to the vicious assemblies of the world, joining with them in their sports, and pastimes, and excess of riot;

Thirdly, Breaking of his promises, which he made several times, to come to the congregation; which things were abominable, both in the sight of God and his people.

Wherefore we did exhort him to lay them to heart, and to break off his sins by righteousness, that haply his actions might be forgiven him. These words being spoken, he desired to answer; which was freely granted. Then he said, first, that he did not believe that he was bound to come to the assembly of the congregation. We answered, that the words of the apostle are, *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is;* which we do look upon as a sufficient bond. He then demanded, whether we were such a church as the apostle writ to? We answered, that the apostle did write to the church of God, and that, he did own us to be. He replied, that he denied us to be so. We demanded his reasons. But he gave none to that, but proceeded further to answer to those things whereof we accused him; wherein he said, that he had not broken any promise which he made to us. We answered, that we did wonder exceedingly that he was not ashamed to utter such words; for he had promised many times to come to the assembly of the congregation, but never came according to his promise. He

replied, that he might come yet, according to his word; for he set no time, and therefore was at liberty. We replied again, that we were exceedingly amazed to hear him speak so contrary to that which he knew in his own conscience (if it were not seared) to be true; and to convince him, we instanced in several times which he promised: as at one time, when our brother John Brighten and our brother John Tayler were sent unto him, he promised to come to the general meeting of the congregation at Fenystanton, upon the sixth and twentieth day of the sixth month, if it were a day meet for any man to travel in. But, howsoever, he would come without fail to the assembly at Caxton Pastures, upon the first day of the next week (see 154). Now the first day he mentioned in his promise, was a day very fair and pleasant to travel in; yet he came not. Likewise the last day, that he took, he failed of his word and did not come. At another time he promised me to come to the general meeting at Papworth, on the seventh day of the eighth month; but he came not. These things he confessed; but then he began to excuse himself, and said that he had urgent occasions which prevented him, that he could not come, and therefore we must not judge it breach of promise. We replied, that it did plainly appear to be breach of promise; but if it were so, that he had urgent occasions as he said he had, he should have certified the congregation thereof, that therein they might have received satisfaction. But we told him, moreover, that we were afraid he dissembled in his own breast in making such an idle excuse, as many times he had done before, for we could not be persuaded that he had such urgent occasions as he spake of. For first, we asked, if his occasions could be so urgent, to keep him from the assembly half a year? Secondly, how could it be true that his occasions could be so urgent as he spake of, to keep him from the assembly of the con-

gregation which was but half a mile from his habitation, seeing he could go ordinarily three or four, and sometimes seven or eight miles, to the riotous assemblies of wicked persons, partaking with them in their sports, pastimes, and riotous actions, and that upon the first day of the week, when the congregation was assembled; which things were abominable. To this he gave no answer; but said, it did not belong to us to judge. We told him, we did judge nothing but that we saw, and knew to be true, and could prove them by many witnesses; and therefore we did earnestly desire him, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to repent and turn unto the Lord. But he refused to hearken. Yet we did again desire him to consider what he did, and not to persist in his evil, knowing that he might be mistaken, as once he was before, when he denied the church and the ordinances of God (see p. 57), yet afterwards saw his mistake, confessed his fault, and was reconciled (see p. 71); which we did earnestly desire, showing unto him by the holy scriptures the dangers he would bring himself into, if he did not repent. But he still remained obstinate, refusing to hearken to us. Wherefore we, considering his manifold evils, viz.: —

First, Forsaking the assembly of the congregation, denying them to be the church of Christ;

Secondly, Running frequently, both upon the first day of the week, when the congregation was assembled, and at other times, to the riotous assemblies of wicked persons, joining with them in their sports, pastimes, and riotous actions, to the dishonour of God;

Thirdly, Breaking of his promise so, which from time to time he made with the congregation;

Fourthly, Despising and contemning all the reproof and admonition of the church; and likewise considering the words of the wise man (Eccles. viii, 11), who saith, *Because*

sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil; we proceeded to excommunicate him." The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied therewith.

After this, Edmond Mayle spake as followeth:—"Brethren, according to your order, upon the seven and twentieth day of the eighth month, our brother Marriatt and myself went to Anne Woodward. And speaking with her, we told her that the congregation, being certified by our brother Richard Phillips, that she did intend to join herself in marriage with one that is not of the same faith with her, they were offended therewith, and thereupon sent us unto her to reprove her (as our brother Phillips had done before), and to shew unto her the evil of the action, it being contrary to the word of God, and that profession which she had taken upon her. In which action, if she did not desist, she would bring much trouble upon herself, yea, even destruction; which we did manifest by several examples in the holy scriptures. She answered, that it was true she did intend to marry with such a person; for she found nothing against it, and therefore she was resolved to proceed. Whereupon we did again show unto her the danger thereof by the holy scriptures; and likewise in the name of Jesus did reprove her, exhorting her to desist therefrom. After which we parted from her." The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied with the proceedings, and further resolved to wait until they saw whether it would take place in her or no. After these things praise was rendered unto God, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the thirtieth day of the tenth month, at a general meeting of the congregration held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the most high God, and some words of exhortation, a letter was read which came from our brother

Thomas Disbrowe in Scotland, which was as followeth, viz.—"Beloved brethren; grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, and always and at every time making request for you, that you may be kept together in grace and truth, and that your love may abound more and more, in all knowledge and in all judgment. Beloved brethren, I would that you should understand, that although at my first coming into Scotland, I was much troubled in being deprived of the sweet and comfortable society of the people of God, yet remembering the promises of God, that they are all yea and amen to them whose minds are stayed upon him, it did strengthen me very much, causing me to wait patiently, until God should manifest more comfort to me. Which now he hath done in due time; for there are several persons come to Leith and Edinburgh, with whom I may have comfortable society. The man that brought me first to know them, was a countryman of ours. His name is Thomas Gates. He lived at Ellington in Huntingdonshire. The people are most of them soldiers, of a regiment that is but lately come to Leith, and they are permitted to meet at the Tolbooth at Leith one first day, and at the Tolbooth at Edinburgh another first day. Now, brethren, I would entreat you that you would certify under your hands that I was received into fellowship, according to gospel order, with you. I also think it necessary to put you in remembrance, that you would not be unmindful of me in your prayers to God, that I may be grounded and settled in the hope of the gospel. Salute all the friends with you. And the very God of peace sanctify you all, and present you

blameless at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen."

Your loving brother,

THO. DISBROWE.

Leith, the 3rd day of the 9th month, 1655.[1]

This letter being read and taken into consideration, it [was] ordered that an answer should be sent thereunto, with a letter of testimony, according to the desire of our brother. Which accordingly was done; copies whereof follow:—

A copy of the letter sent to our brother Tho. Disbrowe.

The brethren in and about Caxton and Fenystanton, to our beloved brother in the Lord, Tho. Disbrowe, do wish grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Dearly beloved brother, we received your letter, dated the third day of the ninth month, which hath caused much joy and rejoicing in our spirits, being bound to return thanks to God in thy behalf, for the manifestation of his divine love to thy soul, in that time when thou wert deprived of the society of the saints. For of a truth this was even to try thee, that the trial of thy faith might be much more precious than gold that is seven times refined. Wherefore, beloved

[1] [A few interesting notices of this church at Leith and Edinburgh occur in Mr. Douglas's Hist. of the Northern Baptist Churches. It seems to have owed its freedom of action to Major General Robert Lilburne, himself a baptist, and at this time in command of the army. The church was formed about the year 1652. In the year 1658 its movements were closely watched by a spy of Cromwell, who thinks there is something suspicious in the publication of a book on baptism, so bound "as to roll up like some of your almanacks, fit for one's pocket, that so they may be ready at guards or elsewhere." Thomas Disbrowe was a younger brother of Major-General Disbrowe, brother-in-law of Cromwell. Douglas, pp. 32—43. Thurlow's State Papers, vii. 194, 371.]

brother, we beseech thee to mind the dealings of God towards thee. Lay them up in thy heart. Meditate upon them continually, that thereby thou mayest be kept steadfast and immoveable in the ways of our God; which is the earnest and continual prayer of thy brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ; and likewise that thou mayest be filled with the fruits of righteousness and holiness, being strengthened by the Spirit of our God, until thou comest to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. But now, brother, since the Lord hath caused thee at length to enjoy that which thou didst so much want and so earnestly desire, even the society of the saints, we desire thee to prize the mercies of God. Oh! let the consideration of them draw forth thy soul to praise Him more and more, and to wait upon Him with constancy, knowing that He will never leave nor forsake those that trust in Him. Brother, we have thought meet to satisfy thy desires, in sending thee a letter of testimony, to certify the brethren that thou art a member of the church of Christ. The Lord be with thy spirit. Farewell.

Thy brethren assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Caxton,

The 30th day of the 10th month, 1655.

A copy of the letter of testimony.

The brethren in and about Caxton and Fenystanton, to all the churches of Christ whom this may concern, wish grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Dear and holy brethren, we commend unto you our beloved brother Thomas Disbrowe, he being a member of the

church of our Lord Jesus Christ, received by us, according to the order of the gospel. Wherefore we beseech you to receive him in the Lord, as becometh saints, and to assist him in whatsoever business he shall stand in need of you; and we shall account it as done unto ourselves. Farewell.

Your brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Caxton.

The 30th day of the 10th month, 1655.

After this a letter was read, which came from Twyford, in Leicestershire, which was as followeth:—

To the churches of Christ in the order of the gospel, we, the brethren in the Lord meeting at Twyford, wish all increase of grace, through the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Dear brethren, it is the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, that if we continue in the word, then are we His disciples indeed, and we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. From whence we may learn, that in taking heed to Christ we shall become followers of Him in our lives. And to those that are disciples indeed, are the promises made; for it is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom, but he that doth the will of the Father. Dear brethren, we hope it is all our desire to do good and to communicate, knowing that it is a sacrifice that God is well pleased with, and that which is given to the poor is but lent unto the Lord, and He hath promised to repay it. It hath pleased the Lord, for the trial of the charity of His people, to exercise some with poverty; among whom it hath pleased the Lord to put this our dear brother, James Arding, whose necessity we desire the Lord to draw out your hearts to sympathize with. It hath pleased the Lord to let him fall into debt, to the value of forty pounds; not by any ill husbandry, or neglect of his calling, but through the loss of goods, to the value of threescore

pounds in two years time; and also by reason of a cruel landlord, which did much oppress and wrong him. The particulars are too large to insert. And by reason he owed money to some hard-hearted men, that have put him to as much charge as the debt amounted to, which thing he could in no wise avoid, being very unwilling to complain. We pray you, therefore, in the bowels of mercy, help him to bear his burden, and in so doing you will fulfil the law of Christ, which is a law of love, our congregation being very small. So we leave you to the protection of the Almighty, and His grace be with you all. Amen.

Subscribed by—

John Bull,	Will. Pocklinton,
Rich. Hill,	Will. Caut,
Charles Latham,	Tho. Holliwell,
Sam. Hutton,	Edw. Stevens,
Heugh Brown,	Matthew Wilford,
John Willford,	Tho. Pocklinton,
John Lowthe.	

From Twyford, the 26th day of the 6th month, 1655.

This letter being read and taken into consideration, it was adjudged disorderly: for—

First, None could know whether he got more or less;

And, Secondly, The length of the date being so great, that in that time his condition might be quite altered several ways;

And likewise, Thirdly, It was found to be contrary to an order of the congregation, made in the like case (see p. 19); wherefore nothing was given unto it.

After this, the condition of Joan Parker was taken into

consideration, and the congregation knowing her heinous crimes, viz.:—

First, Absenting from the assembly of the congregation;

Secondly, Running from her service, without the consent either of her master or dame, and letting herself to another man (see p. 143).

And likewise considering that we could not speak with her, (see p. 148), thereby manifesting that she contemned all reproof, and the saints themselves: it was concluded that she should be excommunicated, and that from henceforth she should be esteemed as an excommunicated person. It was likewise ordered, that whosoever met with her, they should certify her of the same.

After this, the condition of Jesper Docraw, of Basingbourne, was taken into consideration, and the congregation, considering his heinous crimes, viz.:—

First, Forsaking the congregation;

Secondly, Breaking of his promises from time to time, which he made to the congregation (see p. 139); they entered into debate what to do in the business. But at length, being willing to manifest all patience towards him, they appointed John Denne and John Gilman to go to him once more, to reprove him for his breaking of his promises, and if he remained obstinate to excommunicate him.

After this, John Denne spake as followeth:—"Brethren, you know that upon the six and twentieth [day] of the sixth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, Jeremy Aldridge of Papworth Everard, being reproved for absenting from the assembly of the congregation, he confessed his evil therein, and promised not to do the like again (see p. 154). Yet, notwithstanding, he never came to the assembly according to his promise. Whereupon you did send unto him again, upon the seventh day of the eighth month, the general meeting being that day held in

the same town, at which time he promised to frequent the assemblies (see p. 155). Yet he did not come. Whereupon our brother Mayle and myself did at another time reprove him for these things; at which time he did again promise for the time to come, to walk more closely, and to frequent the assemblies. Yet, notwithstanding all these his promises, he never was with the congregation to this day, which is full eighteen weeks agone. Whereupon, this last week I did go to his house, intending to have spoken with him; but he was not at home."

The congregation hearing this, did appoint John Denne and Joseph Gilman to go unto him, to sharply reprove him for these things.

After this, the congregation being certified of the neglect of some persons in the accomplishing of some business whereunto they were appointed, they entered into debate upon the business. And at length, for the prevention of the like for the time to come, this order was made by general consent, viz.:—That all persons that are appointed to any business by the congregation, shall give an account thereof in writing, at the next general meeting following. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of the Most High, the deacons gave up their accounts, according to the order of the congregation (see p. 19). After which praise was rendered to God, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the tenth day of the twelfth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of exhortation, John Denne stood up, and spake as followeth:—"Brethren, you were pleased to appoint brother Gilman and myself to go to Jesper Docraw, to reprove him for his faults. According to your order we did go; but we

could no sooner speak to him, but he confessed his fault, and promised to come at the next general meeting at Caxton Pastures. We told him he had often promised but always deceived the congregation, which had greatly aggravated his fault, insomuch that we knew not how to believe him. He alleged many excuses for the time past, but they were very insufficient. But he desired us to try him for the time to come, and if he did not come according to his promise, and give satisfaction to the congregation, we should deal with him as we thought good."

The congregation hearing this, resolved to wait upon him until the next general meeting. After this, John Denne spake again, saying: "Brethren, you did also appoint bro. Gilman and myself to go to Jeremy Aldridge, to reprove him for his faults. According to your order, we went several times, but could not speak with him. Whereupon we went again this morning, and speaking with him we told [him] that we were come unto him by order from the congregation, to reprove him for absenting [himself] from the assembly of the saints; and likewise for breaking of his promises which he had made to the congregation. He made many excuses to justify himself; but, upon trial, they were found all too light. Wherefore in the name of our Lord Jesus we did reprove him, and exhorted him to repent, considering that it was not only the congregation whom he had mocked by his dissimulation, but also God himself. At length he promised us that he would come, and give satisfaction to the congregation. We then desired him to come this day. But he said he could not. We then desired him to appoint a time; he said he could not; but, at length, after many words passed between us, he promised to come at the next general meeting, if not before."

The congregation hearing this relation, that they might

manifest all patience, resolved to wait till the next general meeting.

After this, John Denne spake again, saying; "Brethren, I, hearing that our sister Jane Johnson was intended to marry with one that was not a member of the congregation, contrary to the agreement of the elders met together at Cambridge (see p. 147), I thought myself bound to premonish her thereof; and, accordingly, before there was anything between them, save only the man had spoke to her to that end, I told her what I had heard, and dehorted her therefrom, showing her the danger thereof by several examples. Which thing wrought so much upon her, that she promised me, in the presence of my wife and our sister Anne Woodward, that she would never be married unto him while she lived, unless he should alter his mind and embrace the truth. Whereupon, I was satisfied for the present. But afterwards, notwithstanding her promise, she kept company with the man; insomuch that I was persuaded she intended to make him her husband. Which thing I told her, and desired her to deal plainly with me, and not dissemble, but tell whether she intended any such thing. She denied it, and protested to me in the presence of God, that as she had promised me before she would never match with [him], unless he should embrace the truth. Whereupon I rested awhile; but perceiving that she still kept him company, both night and day, I made known my fears to our brother Edmond Mayle, and Christo. Marriatt, and desired them to come and speak to her about the business. And accordingly they did; and speaking with her, did, in my presence, desire to know whether she had any intentions to match with that man who kept her company. She said, she had not. They desired her to deal plainly, and to confess the truth. Whereupon she again protested, in the presence of God, that she would never have

him to be her husband. Yet, nevertheless, this person, although she had made such promises and protestations in the presence of God, afterwards married this man; although she knew that he was so far from embracing the truth, that he was as great an enemy as could be. Which action I leave to you to consider of. I thought myself bound in duty to declare it."

The congregation hearing this, and taking into consideration her abominable sins which she had committed, in —

First, Joining herself in marriage with one that was not a member of the congregation, but a known enemy to the truth;

Second, Despising and contemning the reproof and admonition of the brethren;

Third, Breaking of her vows and protestations, which she had often made against the matter in the presence of God: did resolve to separate her from the congregation. And thereupon did appoint John Denne and Edmond Mayle to go over to her, to accomplish the business.

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation, that John Brighten being overtaken with drunkenness publicly, in the sight of the world, to the great dishonour of God our Father, he had for that cause sharply reproved him, in the presence of the congregation assembled at Fenystanton. And not only so, but also declared that for the present we should disown and withdraw from him, until such time as he brought forth fruits meet for repentance. The congregation hearing this, were satisfied with the proceedings, it being according to the rule of scripture, 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; 1 Cor. v. 10, 11. After this, Edmond Mayle spake again, declaring that both John Brighten and Thos. Bedford stood to maintain in the congregation, that it was lawful for members of the congregation to marry with those that are without, and that they persuaded others to yield to the same opinion; and therefore he de-

sired to know the mind of the congregation concerning them. The congregation hearing this, and taking it into serious consideration, found this opinion to be contrary to the rule of scripture (see 1 Cor. vii. 39; 2 Cor. vi. 19); and likewise contrary to a former order made by the congregation (see p. 147). Wherefore it was adjudged erroneous. Whereupon it was resolved, that John Brighten shall confess his error, and testify the change of his mind from that opinion, before he shall be received again. Also, Thom. Bedford was reproved for the same, in the presence of the congregation, and exhorted to repentance. Whereupon he desired some time for consideration, which was granted, and the business referred to that part of the congregation meeting at Fenystanton. Only it was resolved, that if they should continue obstinate in their opinion, and not hearken to reproof, they should be excommunicated. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to His name; and so the assembly was dismissed.

ANNO DOMINI, 1656.

On the three and twentieth day of the first month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton, after some words of exhortation, Edmond Mayle spake as followeth, saying; "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint our brother Denne and myself to go to Jane Johnson, to mind her with her evil, and to separate her from the congregation for her heinous crimes (see p. 173). According to your order we did go, and truly through the goodness of God had a fit opportunity to speak with her, and to declare unto her her heinous crimes, which she had committed in joining herself in marriage with such an enemy to the truth; breaking of her many vows and protestations, made in the presence of

God; contemning the reproof and admonition of the church. Which things we desired her seriously to consider, and to change her mind, if peradventure repentance might be granted to her. And truly we found her in such a condition as is marvellous to declare. For when we spake to her she wept exceedingly, and declared the miserable condition which she had brought herself into, in every respect, both natural, even in outward things, as well as spiritual; insomuch that she desired we would wish all young men and maids in the congregation to take warning by her, and not to do as she had done. We then endeavoured to show her the just hand of God against her for her sins; for he taketh no pleasure in the sacrifice of fools. And many words we had. But at length, although we found her oppressed with the evils that did accompany her, she being deceived in her expectation, yet we did not find her any ways repentant for her sin. Wherefore, according to your former resolution (see p. 173), we did excommunicate her."

The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied therewith.

After this the congregation were informed, that Jesper Docraw was present, according to his promise (see p. 171.). Whereupon John Denne was appointed to speak in the behalf of the congregation; who accordingly did, declaring unto him that he stood accused for:—

First, Long absenting himself from the congregation.

Second, Joining with the church of England.

Third, Marrying a wife that was an enemy to the truth.

Fourth, Breaking of his several promises, which he had made unto the congregation: all which things the congregation desires satisfaction for. Wherefore, as you have been formerly reproved, so now, at this time, we do again testify our disowning of those things; beseeching you to give satisfaction by re-

pentance, and for the time to come to break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by walking closer to the ordinances of God; and then shall we with joy receive you. But in the mean time, we shall desire satisfaction, for all the forementioned things in particular. Whereupon he replied, confessing that he had long absented himself from the congregation; but to justify himself, he alleged sundry excuses, which are too tedious here to relate; but upon consideration, they were all found too light. And he being convinced thereof, did confess his evil. Whereupon, the congregation were satisfied in that particular.

To the second crime he answered negatively, that he did not join with the church of England. It was replied, and also proved, that he did join with them, in that he went frequently to hear their ministers, and also joined with them in their worship and service. This he could not deny, but alleged several excuses. But upon consideration, they were found too light. Yet, nevertheless, he would not confess his evil; wherefore the congregation remained unsatisfied. To the third thing he answered, that he had not sinned in marrying such a woman. It was replied, and proved by the scriptures, that it was a sin; yet, nevertheless, he would not confess his evil. Wherefore the congregation remained unsatisfied. To the fourth he answered, that he knew not that he was guilty of breach of promise. It was replied, that he was exceeding guilty of that fault; for, first, on the five and twentieth day of the second month, 1654, which is now about two years past (see p. 99), when Edmond Mayle and myself went unto him by order from the congregation, he promised to write to give satisfaction to the congregation, but did not. Afterwards when I spake unto him upon the five and twentieth day of the fifth month, he promised to come at the general meeting upon the thirteenth day of the sixth month, 1654, but came not. Afterwards, when Edm. Mayle and myself went

again unto him by order from the congregation, upon the eleventh day of the second month, in the year 1655 (see p. 139), he promised again to come to the congregation at the beginning of the fifth month ensuing, to give satisfaction for his former actions; but he came not. All which do evidently prove him to be guilty of breach of promise, and dissimulation in an high degree." Which things, he being not able to gainsay, he therein confessed his fault. Whereupon the congregation were satisfied therewith. Yet, notwithstanding, being unsatisfied in the second and third things, he was again reproved in the name of Jesus Christ, and exhorted to repent; but he refused. Whereupon the congre- congregation entered into debate upon the business; and thereupon it was resolved, that if he continued obstinate, and refused to confess his evil in these things, he should be excommunicated. Which resolution was declared unto him. Whereupon, he did confess his evil in all things whereof he was accused; and, moreover, did promise that for the time to come he would only hear such as brought the doctrine, and were obedient to the ordinances, of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereupon the congregation were satisfied, and he was reconciled.

After this, the congregation were informed that Jeremy Aldridge was present, according to his promise (see p. 171). Whereupon, it was declared to him that he was accused, for—

First, Long absenting himself from the assembly of the congregation; for he had never been with the congregation since the six and twentieth day of the sixth month, 1655, which is now thirty weeks since.

Second, Breaking of promise and dissimulation with the congregation; for upon the six and twentieth day of the sixth month, 1655, at a general meeting held at Fenystanton, he being present with the congregation (see p. 155), was reproved

for absenting himself from the congregation. At which time he confessed his evil, and promised that for the time to come he would not do the like. Yet, notwithstanding, he came not at the assembly of the congregation. Whereupon, upon the seventh day of the eighth month, 1655, at a general meeting held at Papworth Everard, he was sent unto again (see p. 159). At which time he promised for the time to come to frequent the assemblies of the congregation; but did not. Whereupon he was at another time, for these things, reproved by John Denne and Edmond Mayle. At which time he also promised to frequent the assemblies, yet did not (see p. 170). Afterwards, Thom. Bedford and John Brighten accidentally meeting with him, he promised them to come to the congregation: but did not. All which [things] do wonderfully manifest his hypocrisy. These things being declared to him, in the presence of the congregation, he was reproved in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and exhorted to repent; but he refused it, yea, to give any account whatsoever. Wherefore the congregation, considering his former hypocrisy and his present obstinacy, resolved to excommunicate him; and accordingly, sentence was pronounced at the same time.

After this, the congregation was certified that Anne Woodward, notwithstanding the admonition of the church, was married to a person that was an enemy to the truth. Whereupon, the congregation considering how that she had not only sinned in joining herself in marriage with such a person, but also in refusing to hearken to the admonition of the church, when she was sent unto by them (see p. 158):— whereupon the congregation resolved that she should be excommunicated; and thereupon appointed Edmond Mayle, with another brother, to go over to her.

After this, the congregation were certified by Edmond Mayle, that Tho. Bedford and John Brighten had publicly

confessed their faults, in those things whereof they were accused, (see p. 173), and desired to be reconciled to the congregation. The congregation hearing thereof, and being satisfied with their repentance, did receive them again.

After this John Denne spake, saying; "Brethren, I, hearing by our bro. Yarle that our brother Will. Slow, at several times, kept company with riotous persons, drinking with them excessively, to the great dishonour of our God; and that, although our brother Yarle had often reproved him for the same, yet he did not refrain; whereupon, according to my duty, upon the first day of the week, part of this congregation being assembled at my house, I did in their presence reprove him, in the name of our Lord Jesus; exhorting him to repent and break off his sins by righteousness. And, moreover, the sin being so public, and it having given such an occasion to the adversary, I did testify unto him in the presence of God, according to the rules of the scripture (see 1 Cor. v. 11), that until he should bring forth fruits meet for repentance, we should not have any more communion or fellowship with him. And so he remains until this day."

These things being declared, Will. Slow did earnestly desire to be reconciled, and for that purpose did make a public acknowledgment of his evil. After which, the congregation desired to know the manner of his conversation since that time, and therefore demanded of William Yarle what experience he had of him since his separation. Will. Yarle then declared that he had walked very orderly. Whereupon, the congregation condescended to join with him again, upon promise that he would never do the like for the time to come. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of the Most High, praise was rendered unto God, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the fourth day of the third month, at a general meeting

of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and and supplication to the most high God, and some words of exhortation, a letter was read which came from our brother Thos. Disbrowe, which was as followeth;—

Unto the church of God at Caxton and Fenystanton, gathered together in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you, from God the Father, and from his Son Jesus Christ.

Beloved brethren, I am bound to give God thanks continually on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, and for your communicating it to me in a most plentiful manner, and for your care and labour of love towards me. Truly, brethren, after the writing of that letter to you (see p. 164), wherein I did desire you to certify to the brethren of my condition, I was very much troubled that I did not hear from you as soon as I did expect. And, truly, I was almost ready to judge, (though unadvisedly), that you had forgotten me. But upon serious consideration, I found that it was because you wanted a seasonable opportunity. But beloved brethren, my hope of you is steadfast, that as ye have been partakers of the manifold gifts of God, so ye are ready, and willing also, to communicate unto others that which you have received, as good stewards of the manifold graces of God. Brethren, my heart's desire to God for you is, that you may stand fast in the faith, knowing that he is faithful, that hath called you. For the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. And we being not altogether ignorant of his devices, therefore let us take heed to ourselves, lest at any time we let these things slip out of our minds, and lest a root of bitterness spring up and defile us; and that we may stand fast in the hope of the gospel, and not be tossed about with every wind of

doctrine; for it is a good thing that the heart be established always in that which is good. But, brethren, I do not write these things unto you because I fear any declining in you from the truth, but that I think it is my duty, and [of] every one of us, to exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching: knowing that shortly we must put off this earthly tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed us.

Beloved brethren, I hope that I shall hear of an increase amongst you, when our brother Gates doth return to me. And I having more to write, but being straightened for time at present, I shall conclude; only beseeching you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers for me, that I may be kept blameless unto the coming of Christ our Saviour. And now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; and the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Your brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,

THOS. DISBROWE.

Leith: 17th day of the 2nd month, 1656.

After the reading of this letter, the congregation were certified that Jesper Docraw, contrary to his promise (see p. 177), had again went to the meetings of the church of England, joining with them in their false worship. Whereupon, John Denne and John Gilman were appointed to go to him to reprove him for his faults, and to exhort him to come to the congregation to give satisfaction for his heinous crimes.

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation, that Anne Woodward being often reproved for her faults, but she remaining obstinate, was excommunicated according to

order (see p. 178). The congregation hearing thereof, were satisfied therein.

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation of a great difference that happened between Joan Newman and Henry Browne, about some money which she claimed and he denied, together with the general transactions that had happened in reference thereunto, which are too tedious here to relate; but in sum, the congregation hearing thereof, referred the business to that part of the congregation meeting at Fenystanton. After which, and the administration of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to His name, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the fifteenth day of the fourth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of exhortation, John Denne spake saying, "Brethren, according to your order (see p. 181), brother Gilman and myself, went to Jesper Docraw, and did reprove him for his faults in joining with the church of England, contrary to his promise. He told us, that he did not think that his promise did extend so far as to exclude him from that. We told him, that was one thing which was laid to his charge (see p. 175), and he confessed his faults therein, and promised the contrary before the congregation. Wherefore we desired him to consider with himself, and to call to mind what he had done, and to give satisfaction to the congregation whom he had offended. He then promised to come this day, and accordingly he is present at this time."

Whereupon it was demanded of him, why he was so soon unmindful of his promise, to aggravate his former faults thereby. He answered, that he did think he had not broken any promise; but seeing it appeared that he had, he was heartily sorry; and moreover, upon examination, con-

fessed his action to be unlawful, viz., his joining with the church of England, and promised never to do the like again. Whereupon the congregation were satisfied, and condescended to continue communion with him.

After this, Edmond Mayle spake as followeth, saying, "Brethren, I formerly gave you an account of a difference which happened between Joan Newman and Henry Browne, about money which she claimed due to her but he denied. At which time (see p. 182), you were pleased to refer the business to part of the congregation. Whereupon we laboured much to decide the controversy, but could not. Whereupon we desired Joan Newman, whom we judged faulty, to choose some of the congregation to decide the business; but she refused it. Then we desired her to choose some of any other congregation; but she refused it. And not only so, but forsook the assembly of [the] church. Whereupon we sent to her to know the reason why she forsook the assembly; but she refused to show any reason, yet said she would never come any more at the congregation. Whereupon, we sent again to desire her to give us a reason; and likewise did reprove her for her sin. But she again refused to give us any reason, and likewise contemned all our reproof; yea, moreover, gave forth reviling speeches against those that were sent unto her, yea, against an elder of the congregation. Which things we considering, sent again the second and third time to reprove her for her faults; but she refused to hearken to our words. Wherefore we, considering these things, and how she despised and comtemned all our reproof and admonition, we excommunicated her."

The congregation hearing this relation were satisfied therewith. After this, the deacons gave up their accounts; after which, and the administrations of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered unto his name, and so the assembly were dismissed.

On the seven and twentieth day of the fifth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the most high God, some words of doctrine and exhortation were spoken; amongst which there was a word spoken concerning the necessity of officers in the church. Which thing being taken into consideration, it was thought meet that some more officers should be ordained in this congregation; and for that purpose it was concluded, that the fifth day of the seventh month should be observed, by fasting and prayer, to accomplish the business. After this the congregation were informed touching the great disorder of John Salmon of Fenystanton, and Margaret Weyman of Over; and that although they had been reproved according to order, yet they remained obstinate. Whereupon, the congregation did order and appoint Edmond Mayle and Robt. Cole to go to John Salmon, to reprove him for his faults, and to proceed as necessity should require. Likewise Edmond Mayle, and bro. Cranfield, and Tho. Coxe were appointed to go to Margaret Weyman, to reprove her for her faults, and to proceed as necessity should require. After this, the congregation were certified that our sister Sarai Browne, having removed her habitation to Royston, was there intended to take to her husband one that was not a member of the congregation; and that she had been reproved and admonished, orderly, by our brethren at Royston; but she despised and contemned all their reproof and admonition. Whereupon, our brother Mayle being desired to go over to her, if peradventure she might hear his words, accordingly did go; and speaking with her did sharply reprove her for her evil intention, showing unto her the manifold evils that did accompany, and desiring her to desist from her intention. But she appeared obstinate, altogether refusing to hearken to his words, and so continueth to this day. Which thing the congregation taking into consideration,

resolved to send a letter to the brethren at Royston, to testify our dislike of her intention, and also to desire them not to neglect their duty in reproving her. Which accordingly was done; a copy whereof followeth:—

The brethren in and about Caxton and Fenystanton, to the faithful in Christ Jesus at Royston, wish grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Dear and holy brethren, called out of this present evil world, and sanctified through the knowledge of the truth, by the Spirit of our God. Beloved, we did greatly rejoice giving thanks unto our God, who according to the rules of his mercy, and the abundant glory of his grace, manifested in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath shed abroad his love in your hearts; teaching you to love the brethren, and to receive the truth in the love and simplicity thereof, as it is in Jesus; being confident that he which hath begun this good work in you, will perform in the day of Christ. Wherefore, brethren, we beseech you be stedfast in those things which you have received. Be fervent in spirit. Take heed of giving the least advantage to Satan; for we are not ignorant of his devices. Oh! how many ways doth he labour to destroy the church of God; amongst which, we have taken notice greatly of his wicked device, in persuading many members of the congregation to join themselves in marriages with those that are without. Which evil we have had experience of, and have seen the sad effects thereof. Wherefore, we suppose ourselves bound in duty to premonish you thereof; beseeching you to abstain from all such actions, which are abominable in the sight of God, lest you fall at that which hath been a stumbling-block to saints in all ages. And do not only abstain therefrom, but likewise manifest

your dislike to all, by executing the judgment of the Lord against all such as are guilty of this abomination; that so your consciences may he void of offence in the day of Christ, when his woes shall be accomplished against all such persons who fear not to transgress his righteous laws. Now, brethren, touching our sister Sarai Browne, who, as we do hear, persisteth in that abominable intention, notwithstanding the reproof and admonition of the saints; we do hereby testify unto you, in the presence of God, desiring you to declare the same to her, that if she continueth in her intentions, and doth not repent from her evil, we shall not own her as a member of the church of God; but look upon her as one justly separated from the fellowship of the saints. Thus having made known our minds unto you, we shall desire you fully to discharge your duties in this thing. Brethren, we beseech you to pray for us; that we may labour together in the unity of the faith, being filled with the fruits of righteousness and holiness, unto the glory and praise of God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Brethren, farewell. Be of one mind. Live in peace. And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the love of the Father, shall be with you all evermore. Amen.

Your brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fenystanton.

The 27th day of the 5th month, 1656.

After this, the congregation were informed that John Brigten, having removed his habitation to Cambridge, did mightily frequent the ale-houses, keeping company with idle persons, drinking with them excessively from day to day; and that also he was intended to take an idle and lascivious person to his wife; and that for these things he had been often reproved and admonished by the brethren at Cambridge, but he refused to hearken. Which thing the con-

gregation taking into consideration, and finding the evils to be very great, Edmond Mayle and Hen. Browne were appointed to speak with him, to reprove him for his faults, and if he remained obstinate to excommunicate him. After which, and the administration of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the fifth day of the seventh [month,] according to order, the congregation observed a day of fasting. At which time the congregation being assembled, first, prayer was made to the most high God; afterwards, a word was spoken from the scripture, touching the necessity of officers in the church, and the qualifications of them, and of their respective duties, together with the manner of their election and ordination. After which the congregation entered into debate, touching the number of officers that should be chosen. Upon which it was resolved, that there should be chosen one elder; four, to teach in the congregation, who should not meddle with the office of an elder; and two deacons. After this, the congregation entered into debate about the manner of election. Upon which it was resolved,—

That two companies should be sent forth from the congregation apart, the one from the other, to nominate the persons.

Secondly, that if the congregation should give their general consent to the persons so nominated, that then they should testify the same by the holding up of the hand.

Thirdly, that the persons thus chosen, should be set before the elders of the church for their approbation.

Fourthly, that if the persons chosen as aforesaid should be approved by the elders, that they should be ordained by the laying on of hands.

These things being generally concluded, first it was agreed that one elder should be chosen. For which purpose, two companies were sent forth from the congregation, each of them containing in number about six persons. These companies being gone forth apart, the one from the other, after a time one company returned, and nominated unto the congregation Christo. Marriatt. Afterwards, the other company returned, and they also, though being apart from the other, nominated the same person. After which the congregation generally testified their consent, by the holding up of the hand. After which the said Christopher Marriatt was examined by the elders, touching his judgment in many necessary things; especially those things which are matters of controversy in many congregations. Amongst which were these following things, viz.: whether laying on of hands ought to be observed in the church, so as to administer it upon every member. To this he answered, that he did believe it.

Secondly, it was demanded, whether he did believe that a feast of love ought to be observed among the saints, before breaking of bread. To this he answered, that he did believe it.

Thirdly, it was demanded, whether he did believe that a member of the congregation may join in marriage with those that are without. To this he answered, that he did believe they ought not.

After this, he having given satisfaction in these and all other things which were demanded of him, the elders prayed for him. Then they laid their hands on him.[2] After

[2] ["We conclude that where the truth of the gospel is received with the gifts of God's Holy Spirit, there is a sufficiency of power also on the persons so gifted, with the advice and consent of the church, to send forth, or to appoint men to the work of the ministry, whom God hath fitted for such services." Grantham, Christ. Prim. book ii. chap. 9, p. 131.

which, the said Christopher Marriatt being ordained as aforesaid, was publicly declared an elder of this congregation.[3] This being finished, it was concluded that in the next place four teachers should be chosen, to be as helpers in the congregation, but not to meddle with the office of an elder. For which purpose, two companies were sent forth apart, the one from the other (as before), to nominate some to the congregation. After a little time one company returned, and nominated to the congregation John Blowes, John Noble, Will. Woodward, Will. Yarle. Afterwards, the other company returned, and nominated to the congregation John Blowes, John Noble, Will. Woodward, Thos. Phillips. The congregation hearing these persons nominated, entered into debate, whether Will. Yarle or Tho. Phillips should be chosen a teacher. Will. Yarle pleaded, that he was immediately to remove his habitation, far distant from the assemblies of the congregation, and therefore desired that he might be excused. Which thing the congregation hearing, condescended to his desire. And thereupon, John Blowes, John Noble, Will. Woodward, and Tho. Phillips were chosen to be teachers in the congregation, every one giving their consent by the holding up of the hand. After which, they being set before the elders, were examined as before. And giving satisfaction, prayer was made unto God for them.

This being thus finished, it was concluded that two deacons should be chosen. For which purpose two companies were sent forth apart, the one from the other (as before), to nomi-

[3] ["True ordination is only found (at least in some part of it) in the baptized churches. 1. Because they only have true baptism, and where true baptism is not, ordination cannot be regular. 2. Because due election of officers is found among them. 3. The true form or order of ordination is found in our churches. 'Tis certain none are ordained to any office in the baptized churches, till elected by the consent of the church, or at least the major part; and herein they follow the steps of the apostles, Acts i. Grantham, Christ. Prim. book ii. chap. 9, p. 129.

nate two to the congregation. After a little time the one company returned, and nominated to the congregation Joseph Gilman and Robt. Earle. Afterwards the other company returned and nominated to the congregation, Robt. Cole and Phillip Marshall. These persons being nominated, the congregation was divided, some giving their consent for Joseph Gilman and Robert Earle, and some for Phillip Marshall and Robt. Cole. Whereupon they were all four examined by the elders, to see if any exception could be found against any of them. But they all gave full satisfaction to all things that were demanded of them. Whereupon the controversy remained undecided. Wherefore, in the next place, it was generally concluded that we should cast lots. Whereupon lots being made, prayer was made to the Lord that he would order and dispose of them, according to his own mind. After which, the lots were given forth. And the lot fell upon Joseph Gilman and Robt. Earle.[4] Whereupon the elders prayed for them, and laid their hands on them. After which, they were publicly declared to be deacons in this congregation. These things being finished, praise was solemnly returned to the Lord, and so, the day being spent, the assembly was (with great joy) dismissed.

On the seventh day of the seventh month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some

[4] [This appeal to Heaven was often resorted to in those days. "In 1682, Mr. F. Bampfield and his congregation, being looking out for a proper meeting-house, had the offer of three. Not being able to agree as to the eligibility of any one, they laid aside their own prudential determinings, and after they had besought the Lord to choose for them, did refer the determining of it wholly unto him. Accordingly the lots were given forth, one for each place, and that they might not limit the sovereign will of the All-wise, a fourth blank. Having agreed upon one to draw the lot, they all looked up to the God of heaven, expecting his allotment. The lot, being opened, spoke Pinner's Hall." Taylor's Hist. of Gen. Bapt. i. 416].

words of exhortation, Edmond Mayle spoke as followeth; saying:—Brethren, you were pleased to appoint brother Browne, and myself, to go to John Brighten (see p. 186) to reprove him for his faults; and to proceed farther as necessity should require. Whereupon, we opportunely meeting with him at Fenystanton, told him what the congregation were informed concerning him (see p. 186), which things he could not deny. Whereupon we did sharply reprove him for his faults, desiring him to consider from whence he was fallen, and to remember that once before he was found guilty of the sin of drunkenness; and likewise of that evil judgment, believing that it was lawful to take any person to wife (see p. 174), which things he then acknowledged to be evil. And therefore we desired him to consider seriously with himself, how he had fallen again into the same guilt. But, indeed, we could get very few words of him, and those that he did utter did not at all savour of repentance, but rather of stubbornness. Wherefore, we seriously considering his manifold evils which he was guilty of, in—

First, Keeping company with drunkards, being likewise guilty with them of the same sin;

Secondly, Taking to wife an idle and lascivious person;

Thirdly, Despising and contemning all the reproof and admonition of the church; and likewise perceiving him to be obstinate and no hope of recovery, we did in the name of our Lord Jesus separate him from the church, delivering [him] unto Satan, to whom he had yielded himself a servant to obey. This is the sum of our proceedings with him.

You did also appoint brother Cole and myself to go to John Salmon, to reprove him for his faults, in long absenting himself from the congregation, and to desire him to come to the assemblies of the congregation (see p. 184). According to your order we went to speak with him, but could not find him. For indeed it was very hard to speak with

him; for we had taken notice that he would not so much as meet us, if he could avoid it. But not long after, I myself opportunely meeting with him in the field, did declare unto him that bro. Cole and myself were appointed by the congregation to speak with him, for which purpose we had been at his house, but he was not at home. Wherefore I desired him to come to the church, according to his former promise, to give them satisfaction for his long absence. He answered, that he did never intend to come any more at them. Then I asked, what reason he had for such a resolution. He answered, that I knew the reason; for it was because I had publicly reproved him in the presence of the congregation, thereby discrediting of him. I told him, that I did no more than my duty; for those that sin are to be rebuked before all, that others also may fear; and his sin being so public, I could do no less. But, moreover, I told him that I had formerly told him of those things in private, and desired him to amend; showing him how greatly it was to the dishonour of God, and the prejudice of his own soul. For he had many times absented himself from the assemblies, spending his time in the alehouse, sitting up all night, railing with lascivious persons. He replied, that I had spent as much money at several times as he did at that time. I told him, I might spend my money lawfully; but if I had at any time spent it idly, or abused either myself or others, I would willingly give satisfaction. And therefore I desired him, if he had anything to accuse me of, that he would come to the congregation; and if he could make it appear that I had done evil, I should confess my evil, and give satisfaction. But he said, he would not come. Then I asked him, how he would dispense with his promise which he had made, to frequent the assemblies of the congregation. He answered, that he would not be bound to give any account. If he might have gone when he would, and come when he would,

he would then have remained with us; but seeing he might not, he would come no more at us. I then asked him, what the congregation had tied him unto, more than he was tied to by the word of God? To which he gave no answer. Then I desired him to consider what he had done and repent. For I told him, how he promised, when he was baptized, to walk orderly, desiring that what was past might be forgotten; and for the time to come what he came short in words, he should make up in actions. I likewise did set before his eyes how greatly he had dissembled with God and his people in promising, and then to break his promise; for which actions, if he did not repent, and come to the congregation upon the next first day but one, he would be separated from the church as a wicked and unfruitful branch. Notwithstanding this he came not, neither showed any sorrow of heart. Whereupon, considering his great evils which he had committed, in—

First, Forsaking the assemblies of the saints;

Secondly, Breaking of his promise with the congregation;

Thirdly, Sitting up whole nights in the alehouse;

Fourthly, Railing with wicked and lascivious persons;

Fifthly, Despising and contemning all the reproof and admonition of the church:—in the name of the Lord Jesus, we did separate him from the church of Christ. This is the sum of the proceedings with John Salmon.

You did also appoint Tho. Coxe, Will. Cranford, and myself, to go to Margt. Wayman (see p. 184), to reprove her for her faults. Whereupon, according to your order, we did go, and speaking with her told her that we were sent by the congregation to reprove her for so long absenting herself from the congregation; and likewise desired her to consider what she had done, for she was before twice reproved for the

same thing. At which times she promised to come to the congregation, but never did since her promise. She replied, that she did not promise absolutely; but said she would come if she could. We answered, that she did promise absolutely; yet, nevertheless, if she could not come, it would be borne withal. But we desired her to tell us, whether she might not have come to the assemblies since she made her promise, if she had been willing. She gave us no answer, but went away in a very scornful manner, saying she had business to do, and could not talk with us. We then, seeing her stubbornness, did resolve to separate her from the church, according to the rule of Christ. Whereupon we went to her again, and told her, that as we were to reprove her for her sins, so we were to excommunicate her, if she remained stubborn, and would not hearken to us. Whereupon, she brake out into such vain and idle words, which are unfit to be named, not suffering us to speak to her. Whereupon, we considering her manifold evils, and that she altogether refused to hearken to our reproof, we excommunicated her. This is the sum of our proceeding with Margt. Weyman.

The congregation hearing these several relations were satisfied therewith.

After these things, and the administration of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so the assembly were dismissed.

On the nineteenth day of the eighth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, some words of exhortation were spoken. After which a letter was read, which came from Streatham, which was as followeth:—

The church of Christ at Streatham, gathered together upon the twelfth day of the eighth month, unto the church of Jesus Christ, gathered together in and about Caxton and Fenystanton, send greeting.

Brethren in Christ, we hearing of your growth in the order of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and how you are planted in the way of truth—for from you the gospel hath even sounded unto us, and your strength hath manifested to us our weakness. But the longsuffering of our God hath brought us to repentance, and the manifestation of his eternal Spirit hath made known unto us that we are not yet perfect; but we desire to press forward to perfection, as becometh saints. Brethren, our desire is that you take into consideration our condition; and send over to us an elder, for the ordaining of those persons that are chosen by us. We desire you to appoint him to be here on the six and twentieth day of the eighth month. So we rest, desiring your prayers for us, and committing you with all saints to the protection of the Almighty.

Your brethren in the Lord,

John Tabram, Elder, Robt. Daulbe,
Tho. Bedford, Jeremiah Cook.
Robt. Gardner,

This letter being read and taken into consideration, it was ordered that both John Denne and Edm. Mayle should go to Streatham, and to assist the brethren in those things that they should find necessary. After this, a letter was read which came from Peterborough, which was as followeth:—

To the church of Christ at Fenystanton, we, the church of

Christ at Peterborough, send greeting; wishing grace, mercy, and peace, to be multiplied unto you.

Brethren, this is to acquaint you with the proceedings of our friends at Stamford, the 2nd and 3rd of July, 1656. The things that are agreed upon by the messengers and the brethren, are as followeth:—

First, That two messengers be sent into the west, for the work of the ministry.

Secondly, That our beloved brethren, John Fairbrother, and Will. Reignolds, be sent to the said work.

Thirdly, That the church shall defray the charge of the messengers and their families. And these are the names of the persons that did engage for the societies hereafter named: Will. Inge and Tho. Cristian for Leicester, and to stir up Earlshilton and Mount Sorrell; John Kirby for Nottingham, and to stir up Winford and Rimson; Isaac Spence and Christoph. Bell for Peterborough, and to stir up Wisbeach and Fenystanton; Benjamin Morley and Francis Stanley for Ravensthorpe, and to stir up Newton, and as many as they can; George More for Whitwell and Markfield, and to stir up Twyford; John Wilkinson to stir up Langtoft, Thurlby, and Bitome.

Fourthly, That Cristoph. Bell, Isaac Spence, and John Wilkinson shall take care of sister Reignolds, to visit her in her husband's absence; also, that Benjamin Morley and Francis Stanley shall take care of sister Fairbrother, to visit her in her husband's absence.

Fifthly, That the brethren that meet at Uppingham be sent unto, to certify them that, according to bro. Ainsworth's desire, we have sent two messengers into the west, for the work of the ministry, and to signify unto them that we have agreed that the churches shall defray the charges of them and their families; and we desire all those whom the Lord

hath, or shall open their hearts, to contribute to so good a work, both with their prayers and with their substance according to the mind of Christ, the practice of the apostles, and saints of old.

Sixthly, That the church of Christ be exhorted to make prayers for our beloved brethren aforesaid; that the work of the Lord may prosper in their hands.

Seventhly, That the messengers aforesaid shall go forth speedily to the work.

Eighthly, That our beloved brethren aforesaid shall have ten shillings a week for themselves and their families.

Ninthly, We desired several parties of our friends to go to end the differences in general societies, and to use the utmost of their abilities for the making them up again, and to settle them in peace and truth.

Now, dear brethren, we hope you will not be backward in anything that will make for the promoting of the honour of God, but with all readiness encourage us and them in so good a work, knowing what great need we have of encouragement from you, who are under laying on of hands, by reason of the little help we can expect from them that are not under laying on of hands. Dear brethren, you being by these lines acquainted with our desires, and the desires of our friends, we hope you will look upon yourselves engaged to lay forth yourselves, with all readiness and cheerfulness, to contribute your prayers and substance to the assistance of them who are employed in so good a work, and to the helping forward of their joy; but we hope we shall not need to use many motives to stir you up unto it, hoping it will be incumbent upon your hearts to do more than we say, knowing whose work it is and whom ye serve; knowing this also, that the Lord loves a cheerful giver, and hath promised that they that sow bountifully, shall reap bountifully. So doubting nothing of your faithfulness and readiness, we shall say no

more, but shall commit you to the Lord for protection and direction, both in this and all other things. So with the remembrance of our love to you all, we shall rest

Your brethren and companions in the Lord,
JOHN DARGEN, ISAAC SPENCE, CHRISTO. BELL,
THO. HOUSE,
CRISTOP. GRUNGELL, } *Deacons.*
With the consent of the brethren.

From Peterborough, the 18th day of
the sixth month, 1656.

This letter being read and taken into consideration, it was concluded that, for the present, we should not do anything in the business, and that for these reasons, viz.:—

First, Because no man can tell by this way of proceeding, whether little or much would be gathered in.

Secondly, Because one of the messengers was adjudged unfit for that work, he being formerly one that fell from the truth, and joined with those wicked people called Ranters, thereby disabling him from bearing office in the church; as it is written (Ezek. xliv. 10—13), *The Levites that went astray when Israel went astray from me after their idols, they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me.*

After this, the congregation were informed that some persons belonging to the congregation, had gone to hear the teachers of the church of England in their worship of God; and moreover that they did stand to maintain it to be lawful. Whereupon the congregation entered into debate upon the business, and at length it was resolved: That it is unlawful for any member of the congregation to hear the teachers of the church of England, except it be to reprove them.

After this John Denne stood up and spake, saying: "Brethren, about a month agone, our bro. Mayle, bro. Marryatt, and myself, being together, we were informed that

our bro. Robt. Lack, being at Huntingdon about two days before, was there overtaken with drunkenness; and also in that condition railed exceedingly against one of his neighbours, to the great dishonour of God and scandal of his people; which thing we hearing did think ourselves bound in duty to go unto him, which accordingly we did. And speaking with him [we] asked whether those things we heard were so or no. He could not deny them, but confessed it to be true; whereupon we did show unto him what a wicked thing he had done, and did sharply reprove him for it; exhorting [him] to repent and humble himself before God, and likewise give satisfaction to his neighbour. Many words did we use to set before his eyes the greatness of his crime, but he did not manifest any repentance. Whereupon, at length, considering what great dishonour he had brought to the name of God, we did declare unto him that, until he should acknowledge his fault, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, the congregation would have no more communion with him." The congregation hearing this relation were satisfied therewith.

After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of the Most High, praise was rendered to his name, and so the assembly were dismissed.

On the 30th day of the 9th month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of exhortation, John Denne stood up and spake, saying; "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint our brother Mayle and myself to go to Streatham (see p. 195), to assist the brethren in those things that should be found necessary or convenient. According to your order, upon the six and twentieth day of the eighth month, we did go; and coming thither we found the brethren assembled. Whereupon, first, prayer was made to God; after, a word of exhortation was spoken. In the next place, the brethren declared to us that

they had made choice of some officers amongst them, and desired our assistance in the ordaining them. Whereupon we desired to know what officers they had chosen. They told us, that they had chosen one deacon and two teachers, to be as helps in the congregation, but not to meddle with the office of an elder. The persons chosen were Tho. Bedford, and Robt. Gardiner, for teachers; and Tho. Gotobed, for a deacon. We then desired to know, whether they did proceed orderly in the choice; and as appeared by their testimony, they did. We then desired, that if there were any present that had any thing against the persons chosen, they would speak: but none spoke against them. Wherefore we proceeded to ordination as followeth;—1st. Tho. Gotobed, being by the brethren presented to us for a deacon, we prayed for him; then we laid our hands on him: after which he was publicly declared a deacon of that congregation. 2nd. Tho. Bedford, and Robt. Gardiner, being by the brethren presented to us for teachers, we prayed for them. After which, praise was rendered to God; then we brake bread together. Which being done, praise was rendered to the Most High, and so the assembly were dismissed. This is the sum of our proceedings at Streatham." The congregation hearing this, were satisfied therewith.

After this, John Denne spake again as followeth; "Brethren, there lately happened an action of very great scandal, to be done by our sisters, Anne Matthews and Alice Matthews. I shall forbear to name it, it being already known to most of you. But let this suffice, that it was an action bringing great dishonour to God, and great reproach to his people, yea, abominable in the eyes of all men; which being known, it grieved exceedingly many of our friends. Whereupon, upon the seven and twentieth day of this month, I was sent for to Fenystanton; and accordingly I went, and being there, and the congregation being assembled, it was

thought meet to send for the said persons to come to the assembly. Which accordingly was done; but they refused to come, sending us this answer, viz.; that they had nothing to say to any of us, and if we had anything to say to them, we must go to them, for they would not come to us. The brethren that were present, hearing this their contempt, ordered that our bro. Mayle and myself should go to them. Which accordingly we did the same night, and speaking with them, did reprove them, not only for the action aforesaid, but also for refusing to come to the congregation when they were sent for. And with much meekness we did exhort them to consider what they had done, and repent; but we heard not any word from them, that did savour of repentancee. The action they confessed, and likewise confessed that before they did it, they were persuaded it would give offence to the congregation; yet although they were so persuaded, yet they would do it. Whereupon, [we] laboured with many words to bring them to repentance, but could not. Then we declared that the congregation would not be satisfied without a confession of their evil; and likewise such fruits as becometh the change of the mind. To which they replied, that they would never confess their evil to the congregation. We finding them thus stubborn, and perceiving no hope of repentance, we left them that time, only exhorting them in the name of Jesus to repent."

The congregation hearing this relation, entered into debate about the business. And at length resolved, that Edmond Mayle, Will. Woodward, and John Howse, should go unto them again; and if they remained stubborn, and would not hearken to their words, that then they should excommunicate them. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the eleventh day of the eleventh month, at a general

meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of exhortation, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation, that upon the seventh day of the seventh month there came a letter from Wakerly, directed to the congregation, which was as followeth :—

To the congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, meetiny in and about Fenystanton, in the county of Huntingdon, we humbly send greeting :

Looking upon it as our duty, to let you understand that we are a party that did formerly meet with the congregation at Thorpe in Rutland, with whom it is fallen out of late as followeth :—Upon the 24th day of June, or thereabouts, at a meeting, the elders, with some of the members, did consider of a time to break bread; viz.: the first day seventh night after, which was agreed to by all, as did appear by their general meeting. But it so fell out, that two days before the time was expired, viz.: upon the 4th of July, our elders, with some of other congregations, without the churches' consent, did establish a decree to have no communion with those that were under laying on of hands. And when the day aforesaid came, the congregation being come together, with many of the world, the said elders had put off breaking of bread; and made it their work to preach against laying on of hands, calling it an evil, and saying, *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of* [*men*] *are fully set in them to do evil.* They also compared it with the sin of Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire, with many such like expressions; which wrought great confusion at that time, and ever since. We considering the state of things, told them they dealt hypocritically with us, pretending union when they intended confusion: and we told them they exercised a lordly power to establish such a law; and we told them they had done evil in rending the church to

pieces. To which one of them answered, saying; "I think it is the best work that ever I did in my life, and if you call that rending, I will rend them worse, or I'll want of my will." And it appears he will be as bad as his word; for upon the 23rd of this month, he was at Langtoft, to rend that congregation in pieces. And these their actions, it is evident, are countenanced by some members. For one who is great in the business told me, the last first day, that they would justify their elders in what they did. They are now proceeded so far, as they have gone from town to town, and from house to house, to desire us to come in and acknowledge that we have sinned in owning such a principle, or else they will presently excommunicate us. Which thing if it should come forth, although we through mercy are able to bear it, yet we fear it might be a means to weaken the hands of those that are weak, and to strengthen their own party. We, therefore, conceiving that you are in the behalf of Christ as deeply concerned herein as ourselves, have thought it our duty to let you understand our present condition. And even for Christ's sake, and the comfort and encouragement of his people, we do entreat you not only to consider our present condition, but also to yield us some comfort. For you being a full congregation, we conceive you may by the power that Christ hath left you, proceed against such evil doers, by the mouths of such as you shall appoint to come to them face to face. We desire to commit you to the Lord, and to the word of his grace, to be your counsellors herein; and we shall remain, your brethren in the Lord,

George Vincent,	John Killinworth,
David Jenkinson,	James Chambers,
John Hill,	Robt. Bringist.
Anth. Suell,	

Wakerly, 9 m., 29 d., 1656.

Pray fail us not, but with all speed answer these our desires.

This letter being read and taken into consideration, it was concluded requisite to send a letter to the brethren at Thorpe; which accordingly was done, a copy whereof followeth:—

To the church of God meeting at Thorpe, in Rutland. The brethren about Caxton and Fenystanton, in the counties of Huntingdon and Cambridge, wish grace, mercy, and peace, to be multiplied, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Dear brethren, we were joyful to hear of that agreement between you and our brethren under laying on of hands, at a meeting at Leicester; wherein it was agreed that the work of our Lord should be carried on together. But since, our joy is turned into sorrow; for we are informed, by letter from our brethren under the principle of laying on of hands, who formerly walked with you, taking counsel together, and going to the house of the Lord, that you have withdrawn from them. And not only so, but you have made some proceedings against them, by way of admonition, and intend to proceed farther. Now, brethren, our desire is of you, that you would forbear proceeding with them, and let some of the brethren of other congregations, who are not concerned in the things in differenee, hear the matter—for we are persuaded there is something more than laying on of hands in controversy—that so there may be a re-uniting of you in the bonds of love. Brethren, this is our request of you; and our prayer to God on your behalf is, that the Lord will raise up some of his servants to be instrumental in this work; which, being granted, the desires of your brethren and companions in the gospel of Christ, will be accomplished. And so commending you to the Lord, and to the word of his grace, which is able to keep you from falling, and to present you

faultless before the throne of his grace with exceeding joy, we remain,

Your brethren, to serve you in the Lord.

11m., 8d., 1656.

This letter being sent, we received an answer thereto, which is as followeth:—

To the church of Jesus Christ meeting at Caxton, or Fenystanton, in Huntingdonshire; grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied.

Dear brethren, we received your letter of the 8th of this instant; wherein you manifest your rejoicing for the agreement made at Leicester. Which though it be joy to you, yet it is cause of sorrow and grief to us; because we joined with them, which we are commanded to withdraw from, viz., them that own that scriptureless practice of laying on of hands on baptized believers as baptized believers. And whereas you are persuaded, that there is something more than laying on of hands that caused our withdrawing, we certify you, that you are not right in your persuasion therein. As for our uniting together again it is impossible, unless they disown that which the scriptures will not own. And whereas you entreat us to stay our proceedings, and to let others that are not concerned in the difference have the hearing thereof, we judge there is none in fellowship but are either under or not under laying on of hands, and so must needs be concerned in the thing in difference. And as for our proceedings, we have the scripture for our warrant, and God and our own consciences for our witnesses, and we are resolved to follow their counsel therein. But if you, or any other be dissatisfied with our proceedings, we shall be willing to give you a meeting at any convenient place, to

show you the grounds and reasons of our proceeding, if God permit. Thus we leave you to the direction of God and his word, and remain,

Yours to command in the Lord,

Robt. Ward, James Tiptaft, Elders.

Thorpe, 10m., 14d., 1656.

This letter being read and taken into consideration, the congregation perceiving their resolutions, and having had experience of the stubbornness of those persons, they resolved to let them alone. Yet this is remarkable, that although they separate from the brethren at Wakerly for no other cause, as themselves confess, but for owning the doctrine of laying on of hands, counting them such persons as must be withdrawn from; yet in their letter, they acknowledge us to be the church of God and their dear brethren, although owning and practising the same thing. After this Edm. Mayle certified the congregation, that according to former appointment (see p. 201), himself, Will. Woodward, and John House, went to Anne Matthews and Alice Matthews, and did in the name of the congregation reprove them for their sins (see p. 200), exhorting them to come to the congregation, and give satisfaction for their stubbornness." Which accordingly they did, confessing their faults in public. After this, Edmond Mayle spake as followeth, saying:— "Brethren, you were informed at the last general meeting at this place, of the evil behaviour of Robt. Lack (see p. 199). Since which time he hath not amended, but aggravated his evil, in frequenting the assembly of the church of England, and forsaking the assembly of the saints. For which cause, some members of the congregation were sent unto him, to admonish him of his evil. And coming to him, intending to speak with him, he desired them to sit down in the house till he should speak with his father. And under

that pretence, [he] went forth and came no more at them." The congregation hearing this, and having so great expeperience of his wickedness, resolved that Edmond Mayle and Christo. Marriatt should go unto him, and if he did not give satisfaction, to excommunicate him. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to the Lord, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the two and twentieth day of the twelfth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of exhortation, the congregation was informed of a public offence of Tho. Green and his wife, viz., such contention, as that publicly they railed exceedingly, the one against the other, to the great dishonour of God and scandal of his truth. Which thing the congregation hearing and taking into consideration, appointed two to go to them to examine the cause thereof, sharply to reprove them for that great offence, and to admonish them of their evil, and likewise of their duty. After this, Edm. Mayle spake as followeth, saying:—"Brethren, you were pleased at the last general meeting (see p. 206), to appoint our bro. Marriatt and myself to go to Robt. Lack, of Hemingford. Whereupon, we meeting accidentally with him, upon the five and twentieth day of the eleventh month, told him that, by the appointment of the church, we were to speak with him. But before we could declare our message, he asked whether we had put him out of the congregation? We asked him, why he demanded that question? He said, that he was told we had. We asked him, if he heard it from us? He said, No; but he was minded to come no more at us; if he did, it should be as a stranger, to bear his wife company.

We desired to know his reason why he would come no more. He said, it was his mind; and we could get no other reason. Then we asked him, whether he did not believe it was the truth which he obeyed, when he joined with the congregation. He answered, that he did believe it in his heart. We then asked, why he would leave off; declaring to him what he had said formerly, viz., that he would never forsake us. And farther we asked, whether any of us had given him any occasion to depart. He said, No; but it was his mind. And this was all the reason we could get from him. Wherefore we did reprove him for his sins and his hypocrisy, in absenting from the church, although he promised to frequent the meetings, yea, to be more diligent, when he was before reproved for his fault in the same thing. He confessed that he did promise to come; but he was not minded. Yet he said he had come, but now would come no more. We then desired him to consider how hypocritically he dealt, in promising to come when he was not minded; showing him the portion of an hypocrite; and further declared to him, that his own mouth would condemn him, in that he confessed that he was in the practice of the truth, yet was now resolved to leave, giving no reason why; refusing to be instructed. We also told him of his hypocrisy with our brethren, when they were sent from the congregation to speak to him (see p. 206), telling them he would go and speak with his father, and come again, but did not. He answered, that he did not love them, and therefore would not come to them. Considering these things, we did sharply reprove him; but our words would take no place. Wherefore, we considering his heinous crimes, in—

First, Forsaking the assembly of the saints;

Secondly, Joining with the church of England;

Thirdly, Lying, and hypocritical dealing;

Fourthly, Contemning and despising with great stubborn-

ness the reproof and admonition of the church, being like a wild ass snuffing up the wind;

According to our duty, we did excommunicate him, delivering him to Satan, to whom he had yielded himself a servant. After which, he said we should be ashamed of that. We told him, that he had justified us: in saying, that when he walked with us he did walk in the truth, and that now he had nothing against us. After which we parted from him. The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied therewith.

After which, the congregation was informed that John Barnes, of Hemingford, had departed from the truth, [and] forsaken the congregation, and that for these things he was reproved and admonished by members of the congregation; but he refused to hearken, being exceeding stubborn. Which thing the congregation hearing, appointed Cristo. Marriatt and Robt. Cole to go unto him to reprove him for his faults, and to proceed as they should see cause. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to the Lord, and so the assembly was dismissed.

ANNO DOMINI, 1657.

On the fifth day of the second month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven and some words of doctrine and exhortation, Cristopher Marriatt spake as followeth, saying: "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint our bro. Cole and myself to go to John Barnes (see p. 209); but I seeing him accidentally, upon the thirtieth day of the first [month], and brother Denne being with me, I desired him to go with me to him, which accordingly he did. And coming to him, I declared to him the cause of our coming, viz., because the congregation were informed that he [had] departed from the truth; which, indeed, we found too true.

For which cause we did sharply reprove him, exhorting him to repent. Many words he used without sense, which are too tedious here to relate; but did not in the least regard our words, but demonstrated abundance of stubbornness, declaring that he was resolved to come no more at the congregation. We desired him seriously to consider his condition. He replied, that he would not consider any more, for he was resolved. Which things we considering, and finding no hope of recovery, did excommunicate him." The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied therewith.

After this, the congregation were informed by those members that were sent to Tho. Green and his wife (see p. 207), that that which was before declared concerning their railing was too true; and it was occasioned by their daughter, whom they kept at home, the man being unwilling to retain her, and the woman not willing to let her go. And further it was declared, that their daughter being kept at home was a great occasion of offence to many; in that she was tolerated to steal wood, &c. Which things the congregation taking into consideration, did resolve that it was unlawful for them to keep a daughter at home, maintaining her in idleness to their own prejudice, who is able to earn her living, and to suffer her to do other unlawful things. Whereupon the persons being present, they were sharply reproved for their sin, and exhorted to put their daughter to service. They did confess their evil in railing, and the man did consent to put his daughter forth; but the woman would not. Many reasons were urged to persuade her, but she would not hearken. Wherefore seeing she would not hear the church, it was declared that until she should confess her evil, and consent to the church, we should not have any fellowship with her.

After these things, and the observation of ordinances of God, praise was returned, and sothe meeting broke up.

On the seventeenth day of the third month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, John Denne spake, saying: "Brethren, I have something to inform you touching Tho. Bedford, who was lately chosen a teacher in the church by the brethren at Streatham (see p. 200), and from thence removed his habitation to Hawson, where he married a wife. Since which he is accused by the brethren of four things, viz.:—

First, Idleness;

Secondly, Drunkenness;

Thirdly, Beating of his wife, and that in the open street;

Fourthly, Swearing; which things were testified to me by our bro. Robt. Pate, and some other of the brethren. And they desired me to acquaint you with the business, and to desire you to assist them in proceeding with him. For he hath, as they say, been often reproved by them. But he regardeth not their words; but standeth, by sophistry, to maintain it to be lawful for a man to beat his wife. Wherefore consider of it, and speak your minds."

The congregation hearing this, entered into debate upon the business; and at length resolved, in the first place, that seeing by these abominable sins he hath given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme, and grieved the saints of God, until he should give ample satisfaction by confessing his sins, and bringing forth fruits meet for the change of the mind, he should not be suffered to teach. Secondly, It was resolved, that John Denne and Edm. Mayle should go over to Hawson, to advise with the brethren there, and to assist them in farther proceedings, as should appear necessary. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to the Lord, and so the assembly were dismissed.

On the eight and twentieth day of the fourth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Feny-stanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, the condition of Jesper Dockraw, of Basingbourne, was taken into consideration. And the congregation taking notice of his horrible hypocrisy (see p. 182) from time to time, resolved to send a letter to him, which was as followeth:

To Jesper Dockraw, of Basingbourne.

Brother, — After salutations due to you, these are to certify you, that whereas formerly, through the goodness of God, you have been enlightened by the Spirit of the Most High, and not only so, but also taking upon you the profession of Jesus Christ, being joined to the church of God; yet, notwithstanding, you have, contrary to the mind of God, revealed in his word, forsaken his saints, despised his ordinances, giving great offence to God and to his people; for which cause, according to our duties which we owe to God, and our love to you, we have formerly reproved and admonished you (see p. 181), that you might be restored to your former estate. To which you have, in words, very often yielded; but your actions are evident demonstrations to us, that when you drew [near] with your mouth, your heart was estranged from the Lord. Wherefore, we being resolved to wash our hands in innocency from all such hypocritical actions, knowing how abominable they are in the sight of God, we do send at this time to you to beseech you to break off your sins by righteousness, according to your former promises. But if not, we do hereby testify, after much patience, that if you do not by the 20th day of the seventh month, which will be a general meeting of

the congregation at Fenystanton, give satisfaction to us, we shall from thenceforth look upon you as separated from the church. But in the mean time we shall remain,

Your brethren in the Lord.

Fenystanton,
28th day of the 4th month, 1657.

After this John Denne stood up and spake, saying: "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint our brother Mayle and myself to go to Hawson to assist the brethren there against Tho. Bedford (see p. 211). According to your order we did go; and the brethren being assembled, first, we prayed to the Lord for direction; afterwards, Tho. Bedford being present, we told them the cause of our coming and what we were informed against Tho. Bedford, which things we found too true. Whereupon we told him, that for these faults it was resolved by the congregation that he should not teach in the congregation, until he should give ample satisfaction. Although he heard this, yet he regarded it not, but went away from us, sending us a few words in writing to no purpose; whereupon we entered into debate upon the business, and at length, we considering his public crimes, and that although he had been often reproved yet he would not hearken, we thought it our duty to excommunicate him. Whereupon we sent for him again, and he came to us; whereupon we told him again of his faults, desiring him to repent; but he slighted our words. Whereupon we did separate him from the congregation." The congregation hearing this were satisfied therewith.

After this the congregation were informed by the brethren at Over, that Frances Adams had forsaken the congregation, and joined with the church of England in their false worship; and that for these things they did often reprove her, exhorting her to repent, but she would not hearken, nor yield to come to the congregation. Which thing the congregation

hearing, did upon consideration appoint Tho. Coxe and Hen. Browne to go to her to reprove her in the name of Christ, and to show unto her her great evil, and to desire her to come to the congregation.

After this, Anne Matthew, of Fenystanton, having been long absent from the assembly of the congregation, and the brethren being therewith unsatisfied, she was desired to make known the cause of her absenting herself. Which accordingly she did, and gave full satisfaction therein. After which, Anne Smith of Boxworth, having likewise been a long time absent from the assembly of the congregation, and the church being therewith greatly unsatisfied, she was desired (being at this time present in the church) to declare the reason why she had so long absented herself from the congregation. She gave many reasons, and made many excuses, but they were all so frivolous that they gave no satisfaction, but made the brethren more unsatisfied; whereupon the vanity of her excuses was showed unto her, and she was desired seriously to consider thereof. But she burst forth in anger, and replied that she would not come any oftener; upon which she was reproved for her faults and exhorted to repent, and to break off her sins by righteousness, and her transgressions by amendment of life. Whereupon, John Noble asked by what authority we did it; saying, if we had no command for it then it was will-worship and idolatry. It was replied, that it was by the authority of the scriptures, wherein we are commanded to reprove and exhort. He replied that it must be done in preaching. It was again answered, that as we are to reprove generally in preaching, so particularly when we see offences; as in this case, when persons absent themselves from the assembly of the congregation, it being contrary to the holy scriptures which saith, *Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.* And also reproof in this thing, is according to a general decree of the congregation (see p. 126). This being

said, he brake forth in great heat of spirit, and said that he cared not for our general orders, "for that which you have is will-worship and idolatry." Whereupon he was sharply reproved for his rash accusing of the congregation of idolatry; his labouring hereby to make rents and divisions in the church, and his despising the orders of the congregation; but he refused to hearken, appearing very stubborn. Which thing the brethren seeing, he was desired for the present to withdraw, and accordingly he did; after which the congregation entered into debate upon the business, and upon consideration he was adjudged in a great fault. And also the seventh day of the fifth month was appointed to be observed a day of fasting; at which time it was ordered, that the business should again be taken into consideration. After this, we proceeded in the observation of those ordinances of God which were intended; after which praise was rendered to the Lord, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the seventh day of the fifth month, according to former order (see above), the congregation assembled, and observed the day by fasting. At which time, after some time was spent in prayer and supplication, the business of John Noble was taken into consideration. And he being absent, he was sent for to come to the congregation; and accordingly he did come. Whereupon he was reproved for his former fault, and desired to acknowledge his evil. But he persisted therein, and would not hearken, saying, that we had no ground for what was done, and therefore it was idolatry. It was answered, and proved to be according to the scriptures of truth; as appeared by the example of Paul, who reproved Peter publicly, and it is the exhortation of Paul, to rebuke before all, which thing was the practice of the apostles at divers times. Yet this, and much more which was spoken, would not satisfy him. Whereupon, the congregation being willing to manifest

all gentleness towards him, propounded this: viz., that although they were satisfied with what was done, yet for his satisfaction public reproof should be forborne, until persons should refuse to hear two or three [admonitions]. Notwithstanding this, he would not condescend, unless the former practice should be utterly disowned as unlawful. Which thing the congregation hearing, and perceiving hereby his great stubbornness and obstinacy, he was sharply reproved, in the name of Jesus Christ. And also it was declared, that seeing he had refused the offer of the congregation, we should now continue our former practice: viz., to reprove publicly for public offences, we being satisfied therewith. He then asked, why we would so far condescend to him if we thought our practice lawful. It was answered, that we might do it; for although it is lawful to eat meat, yet Paul saith, he would eat no meat while the world stood, if it made a brother to offend. He then told us, he did not desire us to leave anything for his sake; yea, great was his stubbornness, refusing to hearken to sound words. Wherefore he was again reproved, and showed the error of his way, insomuch that at length he desired to consider of it, until the nineteenth day of this instant; and also desired that John Denne might be at Fenystanton at that time, which was granted to him, and the business referred till then.

After this, there was again some time spent in prayer, and then, the day being spent, the assembly was dismissed.

On the ninth day of the sixth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, with some few words of doctrine and exhortation, Tho. Coxe and Hen. Browne certified the congregation that, according to their order (see p. 214), they went to Over to Frances Adams. But she would not by any means suffer them to speak with her.

Once they saw her; but when they desired to speak with her she went away, saying, that she was resolved not to speak with any of them any more; so that they were forced to return without speaking with her. The congregation hearing this relation, and considering how often she had despised reproof, as appeared by the testimony of the brethren at Over, and refused to come to the congregation, and that now she would not be spoken with; it was resolved, that from henceforth she should be excommunicated from the congregation. And it was ordered, that any member of the congregation that should speak with her should certify her of the same.

After this John Denne spake as followeth, saying; "Brethren, I suppose you cannot forget the matter of John Noble, that happened the last meeting, and also how that it was referred to the seventh day of the fifth month, to be then taken into consideration. At which time, after much debate, he desired to consider thereof, until the nineteenth day of the fifth month. At which time he desired that I should be present; and accordingly I was with some other of the brethren at Fenystanton. At which time, after prayer and a word of exhortation, we desired to know whether he had considered of his evil. He answered, that he had considered of the matter, and that he was of the same mind, and was resolved not to alter. And many words he did use, labouring to rent and divide the church; comparing the congregation to those old sinners amongst the children of Israel. Whereupon he was sharply reproved, and admonished of the error of his way; but altogether refused to hearken, and appealed from us to some that were without, who, by his means, were present at the same time. Which things the congregation taking into consideration, viz., his great evil in:—

1st, Charging the church with idolatry;

2nd, Comparing the congregation with those great sinners among the children of Israel;

3rd, Labouring to rent and divide the church;

4th, Contemning all reproof and admonition; and

5th, In forsaking the church to ask advice of those that are without, making his appeals to them: we excommunicated him.

Whereupon his wife departed very angry, and refused to continue with the congregation. Whereupon (praise being rendered to God, and the meeting broke up) we went to her, and asked her the reason of her departure in that manner. She told us, we knew the reason; for her mind is the same with her husband. And this was all the reason she would show us. We therefore reproved her for her sin, and exhorted her to consider her folly. But she would not hear, therefore we left her at that time." The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied therewith. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, as breaking of bread, &c., praise was rendered to the Lord, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the twentieth day of the seventh month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer to the God of heaven and some words of exhortation, it was resolved, that seeing Jesper Dockraw of Basingbourne, refused to come to the congregation, according to their desire, made known in the letter sent to him, (see p. 212,) that from henceforth (as a just reward of his great evils) he should be excommunicate from the congregation.

After this, Hen. Browne certified the congregation of a great difference that was between himself and Tho. Green. And also that Tho. Green being the person which gave the offence, he had told him of it in secret, and reproved him for his evil; but he would not hear. Whereupon he did again reprove the said Tho. Green, in the presence of Tho. Coxe and Rich. Phillips; but he would not hearken at that time

neither. For which cause he thought it his duty to acquaint the church therewith, and desired their assistance. Which thing the congregation hearing, and having examined the business, Tho. Green was adjudged faulty; for which he was reproved by the church. But he despised their reproof, and would not hearken to their words. For which cause, according to the rule of Christ, it was declared to him, that from henceforth we should not have communion with him, but look upon him as a heathen man.

After this, Henry Smith of Boxworth, having been a long time absent from the congregation, and the brethren being therewith greatly unsatisfied, he was desired at this time (being present) to show the reasons of his forsaking the church. He said, that he could not come; but would not shew any reason. For which he was reproved, and his evil shewed unto him; but he regarded it very little. But at length he said, that he and his wife would come to the assembly the next first day, and then they would declare their minds. Whereupon the congregation resolved to wait till then.

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation, that Henry Browne and himself went to Anne Smith, and reproved her for her great evils (see p. 214), and exhorted her to repent. But she appeared very stubborn, having no show of repentance; but greatly by evil words augmented her transgression, insomuch that we find no hope of recovery. The congregation hearing this were greatly unsatisfied. Yet seeing her husband had said that she should come to the assembly upon the next day, the matter was referred until then.

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation as followeth, saying; "Brethren, you know that John Noble being separated from the congregation, his wife also went away. For which the reason being demanded, she answered

that her mind was the same with her husband, and would not hearken to us. Whereupon, at another time she was again reproved; but she would not hearken to us, but despised all our words. Wherefore we went the third time to her, and desired to know whether she had considered of her actions. She answered, that she had considered, but her mind was the same. Wherefore we again reproved her. But all our words were in vain; for she regarded them not. Which things we considering, we did separate her from the congregation." The brethren hearing this relation were satisfied therewith.

After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so the assembly were dismissed.

On the first day of the ninth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, Edmond Mayle spake as followeth, saying; "Brethren, on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month, Henry Smith, of Boxworth, and his wife, according to his promise (see p. 219), came to us at Fenystanton. Whereupon we desired to know, whether he was willing to give satisfaction to the congregation for his long absence. He answered, that he would not give any account to any. If he might go when he would, and whither he would, and come to us when he thought good, he would then continue with us; but otherwise, he said he would not. Whereupon we sharply reproved him, and exhorted him to break off his sin by righteousness; but he would not hearken to us. Then we told his wife that the congregration were greatly unsatisfied with her actions; and therefore we desired her to confess her evil, and return to the Lord. But she continued perverse as formerly, not giving any heed to our reproof; but

contrarywise, speaking evil of the brethren that spake to her. Which things we considering, we declared to her that from henceforth we should not have communion with her, but look upon her as a heathen person." The congregation hearing this, appointed Henry Browne and Robt. Cole to go to Henry Smith, to mind him of his evil, if peradventure he might be brought to repentance.

After this, John Denne spake as followeth, saying:— "Brethren, I am desired greatly by Thomas Bedford to certify you, that he doth earnestly desire to be reunited to the congregation. He saith he is sorry for his sins, and will give what satisfaction will be desired. Only he desireth to hear your minds as soon as may be." The congregation hearing this, entered into debate about the matter. And at length it was concluded, that John Denne and Edm. Maile should go to Hawson, and that a time should be appointed when the brethren there might assemble; and that also Tho. Bedford might be present; to which time the business was referred. It being concluded, that what should be done at that time, should be in as full force as if it had been done at a general meeting of the congregation.

After this a letter was read, which was as followeth:

To all the churches of God, to whom these presents shall come, greeting.

Whereas William Idson, of Witham on the hill, in the county of Lincoln, a faithful brother in [the] order of the gospel, whose zeal and love to the truth have been manifested amongst us, and doth still continue in the truth amongst many troubles and afflictions; but so it is that he is now in a sad condition, by reason of the want of these outward things; for he hath been formerly a man of good estate, both real and personal, and might still have been, had not our brother, through much importunity and many pro-

mises from his landlord, one Mr. Harrington, of future good to be done, been drawn into great bonds with Mr. Harrington, who keepeth himself private by reason of many debts; his lands being mortgaged for his said debts, and also in the possession of one Doctor Johnson, for the space of thirteen years past. By reason of which our said brother was forced to pay many debts for the said Harrington, amounting to the sum of £280 (as appears by a bill of particulars), besides great charges of sale, and other great losses occasioned thereby. Which forced our brother to sell his land, and almost all his personal estate. For remedy whereof, our said brother hath for divers years past, used all lawful ways that our friends would advise him to, touching both the said Harrington and Johnson; who being an enemy to the truth of Christ, instead of doing our brother justice, hath cast him out of the said farm he held of the said Harrington, and put him into a very small cottage at a rack rent. And now, by reason of the aforesaid troubles and charges, he is brought very low; having neither stock nor goods to live upon; he and his wife being both ancient, almost past all work, and are not able to get a livelihood without the help of others. We, therefore, taking into serious consideration the sad and decayed estate of our dear brother and his wife, in having a fellow feeling of his wants, are willing to communicate something towards the relieving this our dear brother and sister. And in so doing, we shall relieve Christ in his members, which is a work acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We also recommend him to your Christian consideration; beseeching you to extend your charitable distributions towards the relieving of this our distressed brother and sister. We hope that we shall not need to stir you up to so pious a work, being assured that you have been taught of God to love one another. So not doubting of your readiness and cheerfulness in the perform-

ing so good a work, we further desire you, brethren, that you would make your contributions as speedily as may be, because of his present necessity; and that you would pay your several contributions, either to our brother himself, or convey the same as soon as may be, by what convenient hands you shall judge meet.

Thus with our prayers to God for you all, that both you and we may be preserved blameless unto the appearing of Christ, farewell. Signed at Westby, the 31st of the third month, by your brethren in the order of the gospel:

JOHN ALLEIN, Pastor.

WILL. BULLIMER, JOHN CORD,
HENRY HITCHCOCK, RICH. BULLIMER.
JOHN BULLIMER.

This letter being read and taken into consideration, it was adjudged disorderly to send such a general letter at random, without a messenger. For, first, it is uncertain whether the parties might be alive, the date of the letter being of so long time. 2nd. No man knoweth what his necessities are, either what will relieve them, or what is gathered, whether little or much. These things considered, and it being likewise contrary to a former order of the congregation (see p. 17), the business was waived.

After this, John Denne spake as followeth, saying; "Brethren, I being lately at London, and at the assembly of the brethren that meet at Tower Hill, I received from several members of that congregation a great accusation against John Blowes, of many great evils which they laid to his charge, viz.:—

First, Idleness in his calling, not providing for necessary uses.

Secondly, Whereas by this means he became indebted to some persons, yet he took no care to pay; insomuch that

bailiffs were employed to arrest him. Notwithstanding which, he was so careless of himself, that he did not at all endeavour to prevent the ensuing danger.

Thirdly, Some brethren perceiving this, and being tender of the honour of God and his good, did voluntarily disburse the money for him; to whom, notwithstanding, he showed such ingratitude, that he altogether neglected the re-paying of the money. And not only so, but also endeavoured, as was supposed, to defraud them; in that he endeavoured privily to depart from his lodging. But being discovered, and asked for his money, he told them that he intended to lodge at Whitechapel, at the sign of the Heron, to which place if they came the next morn they should have their money. But he never came there, but went another way.

Fourthly, They accuse him of lying exceedingly. These things they not only declared to me, but also the substance thereof they sent in a letter the week after I came down; which is as followeth:—

To the brethren at Bourn; the testimony concerning the life of John Blowes, in some of the passages when he did lodge in my house, and when he was parted from us.

Concerning the first: Before his coming to us he had his lodging in Shadwell, at an alehouse, where he had a portion of sickness; in which time, he became a debtor to them where he did then lodge, for lodging and other necessaries which they provided for him; which was unpaid when he came to lodge at my house. And whilst he was with me, it appeared by his action, that he took little care to stop the dangers which did follow through his neglect. For because he neither came to pay his creditors, nor reckoned with them, they employed bailiffs to arrest him, and I, considering his trouble, did my utmost endeavour to prevent [them] from coming upon him. I did therefore go and take that money I

had in my house, and a brother to bear witness, and paid his debts. But being not able to stay for my money, and he not able at present to pay me, I did persuade brother Simon Parratt to pay the money to me; which was performed, but remains unpaid by John Blowes to this day, besides many a promise made by him at several times unperformed to this day. Likewise, I lent him money when he wanted it, and victuals, and lodging, and laid out money for letters and other charges, amounting to the sum of ten shillings, which is still unpaid. But he told me that his father had great business at London, when harvest was reaped, and he should then pay us what was our due. But this being like the rest of his vows, remains unperformed to this day. Also, he did falsely accuse me by his letters, and laboured to stain my reputation, saying that I did purloin his tools. And there is much more of this kind [that] might be spoken, but I forbear. And for the testimony of these things, their names are here subscribed; viz.:—

JOHN THOMPSON, and MARY, his wife.
SIMON PARRATT, ROGER STAMPE.

These things being declared, John Blowes confessed that he did owe some money to the aforesaid persons; but he denied the rest of the things laid to his charge. Whereupon it was declared to him, that we durst not refuse the testimony of so many persons, but ought to believe them. Then he began greatly to accuse them of many things, to justify himself; for which he was reproved, and also advised to go to London to speak with his accusers face to face, and not to accuse them being thus far distant from them. This thing he would not condescend unto. Whereupon the congregation being persuaded by the testimony of the aforesaid persons, and by many other circumstances, that that accusation was true, and therefore exhorted him to confess his

error, and to bring forth fruits meet for amendment of life. And also it was declared to him, that until he should give satisfaction in these things, he should not teach in the congregation.

After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to the Lord, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the thirteenth day of the tenth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, Robt. Cole spake, saying: "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint myself and bro. Browne, to go to Henry Smith (see p. 221). Accordingly we did go; but speaking with him we found [him] very resolute. For if he might join with us, and go whither he would, at what time he thought good, and come to us when he pleased, then he said he would continue; but otherwise, as he said before, he would leave us. We reproved him, and exhorted him to repent; but [he] would not hearken to us." The congregation hearing this, and perceiving that his heart was turned from the Lord: as our Saviour declareth, *no man can serve two masters, but if he love one he must hate the other*—it was concluded, that Edmond Mayle and Henry Browne should go unto him, and if he would not repent, to excommunicate him.

After this, John Denne spake, saying: "Brethren, the desire of Tho. Bedford being declared to you (see p. 221), upon consideration you were pleased to appoint our brother Mayle and myself to go to Hawson; at such a time [that] both Tho. Bedford and the brethren there, might have sufficient notice to meet. Accordingly I acquainted Tho. Bedford with your resolutions the same week, and also told him we intended speedily to go to Hawson. Whereupon he de-

sired that the business might be deferred for a little time; because (as he said) his wife was in childbed, and he would have her be able to go abroad, that we might hear what she would say. Whereupon we delayed a time; but upon the tenth day of this instant, we (having given the brethren at Hawson and Tho. Bedford sufficient notice thereof) went to Hawson, where we found the brethren assembled. Whereupon, in the first place, we prayed to the Lord for wisdom and direction. Afterwards, Tho. Bedford being present, the cause of our meeting was declared. But the effects thereof were contrary to our expectation; for instead of receiving satisfaction from Tho. Bedford, we were more dissatisfied. For we found great hypocrisy, and evil words and actions. For although he desired us to stay while his wife was able to go abroad, that we might hear what she would say; yet he carried her from Hawson the week before, to prevent us from speaking with her. Also he was accused by the brethren of many errors in judgment, which he could not deny; and also for declaring publicly before many wicked persons, that we are all whores and rogues. These things being proved against him, I asked him what he said to it, and whether he was persuaded that he spake true. To this he would answer nothing, either good or bad; but went immediately out of the house. Whereupon it was then resolved, that his sins were so great, that we ought not to have any fellowship with him; so that his excommunication was continued.

"After this, a word of exhortation was spoken to the brethren; after which, praise being given to God, we parted from them." The congregation hearing this, were satisfied with the business.

After [this] the matter of John Blowes was taken into consideration. And he being present, he declared that according to the advice of the brethren, he went to London, and that he had given full satisfaction to all his accusers.

The congregation hearing this, desired a certificate from the brethren at London. Whereupon he produced this ensuing writing, viz. :—

"These are to certify the brethren at Caxton Pastures, that brother Blowes hath paid the money due to John Thompson, Simon Parratt, and Roger Stampe, and hath given full satisfaction for all things they have charged against him. "ROGER STAMPE."

This note being read and taken into consideration, it was asked why John Thompson and Simon Parratt did not subscribe it, seeing they subscribed his accusation (see p. 225). He answered, that he did not speak with John Thompson, and that Simon Parratt refused to set his hand to it, because John Thompson was not present. It was then demanded, why he did not speak with John Thompson. He answered, that he endeavoured twice to speak with him, but could not. Whereupon there was much debate upon the matter; but at length it was resolved, that the foregoing writing was not a sufficient testimony, because, First, It was not adjudged safe to receive the testimony of one person; Second, It was not thought possible that he should give satisfaction, and not see his accusers. These things considered, John Denne was appointed to write to London touching the business, and in the meantime the matter was deferred until we should hear from thence.

After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to the Lord, and so the assembly were dismissed.

On the four-and-twentieth day of the eleventh month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, John Denne

spake, saying: "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint me to write a letter to London, touching the business of John Blowes. According to your order I did write to brother Loveday, an account whereof I think meet to give you. The letter was as followeth:—

For his beloved brother, Samuel Loveday.[5]

Beloved brother,—After salutations due unto you in the Lord Jesus Christ, wishing the increase of grace, and the knowledge of God to be granted to you; these are to acquaint you that when I was last with you, I received an information by several members of your congregation, especially by Roger Stampe and Simon Parratt, touching the behaviour of John Blowes, when he was with you at London, by whom he was then accused of great evils, viz., First, Of idleness in his calling, not providing for necessary uses. Second, Whereas by this means he became indebted to some persons, yet he took no care to pay; insomuch that bailiffs were employed to arrest him, to the dishonour of God. Notwithstanding which, he did not [at] all endeavour to prevent the ensuing danger. Third, Some brethren perceiving this, and being tender of the honour of God and his good, did voluntarily disburse the money for him; to whom, notwithstanding, he showed such ingratitude, that he altogether neglected the repaying of the money, and also endeavoured (as was supposed) to defraud them; in that he endeavoured privily to depart from his lodging. But being discovered, and asked for the money, he told them that he intended to lodge in White-

[5] [Mr. Samuel Loveday is spoken of by Crosby as "a learned, pious, and very serious minister of the gospel." His people, after his decease in 1687, and the cessation of persecution, met somewhere in Goodman's Fields, and afterwards in Virginia Street. The church meeting in Church Lane, Whitechapel, under the ministry of the late Dan Taylor, was the successor of the one at Tower Hill. Mr. Loveday was the author of an Exposition on the 25th Matthew, 8vo., 1675; and of another work on Reprobation. Crosby, iv. 250.]

chapel, at the sign of the Heron, to which place if they came next morning they should have their money. To which place he never came, but went another way. Fourth, They accuse him of lying very heinously, not regarding his promises and engagements. The substance of these things being sent down in a letter to us, subscribed by John Thomson and Mary his wife, Roger Stampe and Simon Parratt; which things we considering, and knowing how dangerous it is to suffer a brother to go on in sin, and also to heal a wound slightly, of which the Lord complains; we thought it our duty to tell him of these things. Which accordingly we did, showing unto him his error, and exhorted him to confess his faults, and to bring forth fruits meet for amendment of life. But he greatly justified himself. Whereupon our advice was, that he would come to London, and clear himself before his accusers. And if he should give ample satisfaction to you, we (being certified thereof by sufficient testimony) should be satisfied. This he altogether refused whilst he was with us; but afterwards went up, and being returned, brought us this enclosed note (see p. 228), which did not satisfy us; because, first, We judged it not safe to receive the testimony of one; especially when other of his accusers refused to subscribe, as Simon Parratt did. Second, We think it not possible that he should give satisfaction, when (as himself confesseth) he did not see all his accusers. Which things considered, I was appointed to write to you, and you are hereby desired to make inquiry of the business, and to send us word as soon as you can. For the matter is in suspense till we hear from you. For if he hath given full satisfaction, as he pretends, it will suffice. Yet we suppose that the payment of the money without humble confession of transgression, since there hath been so great an aggravation of offences, will not be sufficient. But I need not direct you in this thing, the wisdom which you have received from above being sufficient;

to which I shall leave you at this time, hoping that you will not be negligent, either in inquiring or sending to us concerning this matter. And now, commending you to the Lord, I shall remain,

Your brother in the Lord,

JOHN DENNE.

Caxton, 24th day of the 10th month, 1657.

This letter, I sent; but have not yet received any answer." The congregation hearing this approved thereof; and further resolved to wait until they received an answer to the letter, before anything should be concluded of.

After this, Edmond Mayle spake, saying; "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint myself and Henry Browne, to go to Hen. Smith at Boxworth (see p. 226). According to your order we did go; but we found him very stubborn, refusing to hearken to any reproof or admonition. Which we considering, together with his former stubbornness, we excommunicated him."

After these things, and the administration of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so the assembly were dismissed.

ANNO DOMINI 1658.

On the seventh day of the first month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of exhortation, John Denne spake as followeth, saying; "Brethren, our sister Martin, of Caxton, the elder, and her son and daughter, having been a long time absent from the assembly of the congregation, and I being informed that Edw. Martin and Elizabeth went frequently to the as-

semblies of the church of England, I went to them and found them all at home. But as soon as I entered the house, Edward arose and went away, and I could not speak with him, although I desired it of his mother, and also desired one of the servants to tell him that I desired to speak with him. But they would not, neither would they let me know where he was, although he was very nigh, and at play, as afterwards I was informed. Which thing I perceiving, I asked his mother why she absented herself so long from the assembly of the church. She answered, that she had not her health, and therefore she could not come. I told her, that God required no more than he gave abilities to perform. In sickness, God doth not require that of persons which he requireth in health. But I desired her to take heed that she did not dissemble, for the all-seeing God would not be mocked. For one thing, I told her, was evident, viz., that she did not only forsake the assembly of the congregation, but also countenanced her son and daughter therein, and also in joining with the church of England. She answered, saying, that she was not their keeper. I told her that she was faultworthy in suffering them so to do; as the Lord said to Eli; 1 Sam. iii, 12, 13, and 14., *I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not.* And therefore I did exhort her to repent of her evil. She refused to answer; but went into another room, and in my hearing mocked and derided. Which thing I perceiving, I desired to speak with her daughter; to whom I said, that she having been formerly reproved, in the presence of the congregation, for her faults; viz., in denying the truth of God, and joining with a false church in their false worship, at which time she desired some time of consideration, I desired now to know whether she had considered of what was then said to her. She answered, yea, she had considered; but she was now

resolved to go to church, meaning the church of England, and not to come to us. Whereupon I minded her of her evil, and reproved her for her sin, exhorting her to repent. But she refused to hearken, mocking and deriding at the ordinances of God. Whereupon I departed from them. They desired me to drink with them; but I refused, not thinking it fit to eat or drink with such scoffers." The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied with the proceedings, and further appointed John Denne and Joseph Gilman to go to them again, and if they did not repent to excommunicate them.

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation that John Noble desired to be reconciled unto the congregation. Whereupon there was much debate; but at length it was resolved, that if he should give satisfaction for all his offences, then he ought to be received again. After this, John Noble came into the congregation, and desired to be re-united. Whereupon he was minded of his former evils; viz.—

First. Charging the church with idolatry.

Second. Comparing the church to those great sinners among the children of Israel.

Third. Labouring to rend and divide the church.

Fourth. Contemning all reproof and admonition.

Fifth. Forsaking the church to ask advice of those without, making his appeals to them.

All which things he appeared very sensible of, and confessing his fault in every particular, gave full satisfaction to all the church; whereupon he was again received into fellowship. After which, his wife desired to be re-united to the congregation; but the congregation not being satisfied, the matter was deferred until the first day of the next week, to be taken into consideration by the brethren assembling at Fenystanton.

After this John Denne spake, saying, "Brethren, I for-

merly acquainted you with a letter which I sent to London by your appointment, touching John Blowes (see p. 229). I have now received an answer thereunto from brother Loveday, which is as followeth:—

Dear and faithful brother in the Lord, whose prosperity in soul and body I much desire, and the rest with thee.

These are in answer to a letter received concerning John Blowes. The brethren that formerly complained of him, are not satisfied with him, as appeareth by their paper here enclosed, and by them signed. For it is one thing to pay them what was owing to them, and another thing to show humiliation for former evils. Therefore I leave it to your Christian wisdom to consider. I fear much he is not as he ought to be. So praying that God would give wisdom to us, to separate the precious from the vile, I shall cease at present to write, and remain, your loving brother, and fellow labourer in the gospel.

Dated, London, Feb. 2nd, '57.

SAM. LOVEDAY.

I received a letter enclosed, which was subscribed by John Thompson and Simon Parratt, which specified as much."

The congregation hearing this, adjudged John Blowes to be in a great fault; not only for his former evils, but also for dealing so hypocritically, in pretending he had given satisfaction when he had not, it being now found to the contrary. For which he was sharply reproved in the name of our Lord, and exhorted to repent. At the first he justified himself, but at length he confessed his sin in every particular. Upon which there was some debate what to do; but at length it was advised, that he should specify the same in a letter to London, subscribed by himself as a testimony of his repentance. This he promised to do. Whereupon it was referred

to John Denne to view what he should write, and to make account thereof to the congregation.

After these things, praise was rendered to the Lord, which, with the administration of some ordinances, being finished, the assembly was dismissed.

On the eighteenth day of the second month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Caxton Pastures, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, with some words of doctrine and exhortation, Edmond Mayle spake, saying: "Brethren, Elizabeth Noble having been found guilty of many and great crimes, for which she having been often reproved, and refused to hearken, upon the fourth day of this instant, she being present with the members of the congregation, and being reproved for her former evils, she appeared very obstinate; for which cause, she was at that time excommunicated." The congregation hearing this were satisfied therewith.

Afterwards Edmond Mayle spake farther, saying; "Brethren, you know at the last meeting Margt. Noble desired to be re-united to the congregation; at which time the business was referred to those members meeting at Fenystanton (see p. 233). According to your order the matter was taken into consideration; but she did not give satisfaction for her offences; for which cause she was not received." This being declared, the congregation was satisfied.

After this John Denne spake, saying; "Brethren, you were pleased at the last meeting to appoint brother Gilman and myself, to go to those evil members at Caxton (see p. 233). Our brother Gilman being absent from home, I went myself, upon the sixteenth day of this instant, and speaking with Joan Martin, I asked her whether she had considered of my former words. She answered, that she was resolved not to join with us. I reproved her, and exhorted her to

repent; but my words took no impression. Which thing I perceiving, even her great evils in—

First, Forsaking the church of God;

Secondly, Joining with a false church;

Thirdly, Mocking and deriding at the way of God;

Fourthly, Despising all reproof and admonition:—I did separate her from the church of God, delivering her unto Satan. After which, I spake with her daughter, Elizabeth Martin, and found her guilty of all the forementioned evils, and altogether impenitent; not at all regarding reproof or admonition. Wherefore, I also delivered her unto Satan. Afterwards I desired to speak with Edward Martin; but he would not be found, so that I could not speak with him." The congregation hearing this were satisfied with the relation touching Joan Martin, and Elizabeth her daughter; and further resolved, that Edward Martin should from henceforth be excommunicated, and that any member that had opportunity should certify him of the same.

Then John Denne spake further, saying; "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint me to view what should be written by John Blowes to London (see p. 235). According to your order I did, which writing I suppose will be satisfactory. It was as followeth:

To brother Thompson and his wife, and to brother Parratt, and to brother Roger:—

Brethren,—These few lines are to let you understand, that God hath been pleased to make me truly sensible of those many evils which have been by me ungodly committed, and by you justly charged against me; which particulars are these:—

First, Neglecting my calling.

Secondly, Neglecting to pay the money due to my landlady in Shadwell.

Thirdly, Neglecting to pay the money due to you, and also my breach of promise.

Fourthly, My not making you acquainted with my departure from your house. All which particulars I humbly confess, that God may have the glory, and that the shame may light upon me, to whom it is due. So desiring you would forgive me, and that you would be assistant to me with your prayers to God for me, that I may not be overtaken in the like temptations, I rest,

Your unworthiest brother,

JOH. BLOWES."

The congregation hearing this were satisfied therewith, and received him again into fellowship.

After this a letter was read, which came from Warboys, which was as followeth:—

We the unprofitable servants of Jesus Christ, unto the church of God in Fenystanton and Caxton; grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied.

Brethren,—Forasmuch as many differences have happened between William Dunne and Tho. Chapman, elders of the church in Warboys, whereby the brethren of the said church have been offended; and we considering that it is the duty of saints to be of one mind, and to live in peace, that the God of peace might be amongst us, we have thought meet to beseech you to send one or more of the elders amongst you, to hear the said differences between the said elders of Warboys; and to help the brethren of Warboys with your advice, for the ending of the said differences; so as the church of God may proceed and go on in doctrine and disci-

pline; so as God may be honoured, and the church may be in peace. We beseech you to send them over as soon as possible you can; if it may be, the next first day. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Yours in the Lord,

John Stokley,	Robt. Stokley,
Robt. Parratt,	Tho. Christmas,
Joh. Catlin,	Hen. Cranwell,
Rich. Hawkins,	Mark Bennett.
George Redman,	

Warboys, April 11th, 1658.

This letter being read and taken into consideration, it was ordered that Edmond Mayle and John Denne should go over to Warboys, to assist the brethren according to their desires.

After this a letter of request which came from Dullingham [Cambridgeshire] was read, which was as followeth:—

To the church of God, in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified and called to be saints, and now in church fellowship in and about Fenystanton.

The humble petition of your poor distressed brother in Christ, Will. Farmer, a member of the church of Christ at Dullingham, humbly sheweth:—That your petitioner, having been lately imprisoned by a most malicious adversary for debt, and brought to great poverty, and being now out of prison, and engaged to pay threescore pounds, and being no ways able to perform it, either by myself or any friends for me; and am therefore threatened to be suddenly cast into prison again, to the utter ruin of myself and family—I am, therefore, constrained and emboldened humbly to crave your Christian contributions towards me, in this my great and most sad condition. And your poor petitionary brother will, as I shall indeed have much cause, pray and bless God for you all.

Holy and beloved brethren, we, whose names are hereafter written, do certify you upon our faithful word, that though we omit the writing of the whole story in particular, of this our beloved brother's sufferings, yet we are deeply sensible of it; and do hereby assure you that it is a most charitable thing to help him. And we all do earnestly desire you, by the mercies of God and Christ, to gather what contributions you can in your congregations, and to send it to brother Hindes of Cambridge, with as much convenient speed as you can. Now, dear brethren, as we have omitted to write the particulars of our brother's sufferings, to avoid the tediousness in writing, so we here omit the using of any motives to persuade you unto liberality in this matter; lest you should think that we are doubtful of your forwardness in so good a work. For we have rather cause to be confidently persuaded, that you are of your own free minds as willing to help us in this our need, as to be helped by us when your necessity doth call for the like from us; and the rather, because you have already had proof of our willingness in such a case. Thus nothing doubting of your candid acceptance of this our letter supplicatory, annexed to this petition, and performance of our desires therein, we commend you to the protection of the Almighty, who is able to enrich you with all blessings, both spiritual and temporal. We desire that this our letter may be communicated unto all the brethren about you, and as far as you can.

Your Christian brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ,

William Fison,	James Branch,
John Raye,	John Sancte,
John Pratt,	Hen. Rawson,
Tho. Pratt,	Edw. Prick,
Hen. Haylock,	John Halock,
Thom. Waller,	Will. Jeffrey.

March 22, 1657.

This letter being read, some scruples were made about it; but at length all being satisfied, it was resolved, that three pounds should be sent to brother Farmer; which accordingly was done. After these things and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the thirtieth day of the third month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, the congregation were informed by the brethren at Over, that Jane Adams had been often reproved by them, for absenting herself from the congregation. But she regarded not their words. Sometimes she would promise to come to the assembly, but always broke her promise. The congregation hearing this information, adjudged that such persons are not meet members for the church of God; and therefore appointed Edmond Mayle and Cristo. Marriatt to go unto her, and to proceed as they should see cause.

After this, John Denne spake, saying; "Brethren, you were pleased to appoint bro. Mayle and myself to go to Warboys (see p. 238), according to the desires of the brethren there, to assist them in the reconciliation of a difference between the elders there. According to your order we did go, and finding the brethren assembled, in the first place, prayer was made to the Lord for counsel and direction. In the next place, a word of exhortation to unity was spoken. After which, we making known to the brethren the cause of our coming, desired to hear the matter. Whereupon Tho. Chapman related that William Dunne, being an elder with him in that congregation, did mightily retard and hinder the work of the Lord; insomuch, that unless there was a speedy remedy, it was not possible that they should remain together. We desired to know wherein. He then accused him of—

First, A proud spirit.

Secondly, Countenancing the brethren in going to hear false teachers.

Thirdly, In countenancing and encouraging mixed marriages.

Fourthly, Countenancing notorious sinners, not suffering them to be called to an account for their sins by the church. All which things were evidently proved before us. And not only so, but although it was endeavoured exceedingly by us and the rest of the brethren, to make him so sensible of his evil as to acknowledge it, and to promise amendment, yet he remained exceeding obstinate. Whereupon debate was had with the church about the matter; and after serious consultation, it was concluded that Will. Dunne was altogether unfit to bear the office of an elder in the church of God; and therefore considering the things aforesaid, and many aggravations thereof wrought before us, it was resolved that he should be deposed from his office which accordingly was done. After which praise was rendered to the Lord, and so we parted from them."[6] The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied therewith.

After this, the congregation being minded of the death of John Gilman and Joseph Gilman, deacons of the congregation, it was thought meet that others should be chosen in their room. But the matter being taken into consideration, it was deferred until the next general meeting. And it was also ordered, that Tho. Coxe and Robt. Earle, the remaining deacons, should, according to their office, oversee the affairs of the whole congregation.

After these things, praise was rendered to God, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

[6] [Further statements on this affair will be found recorded in the Warboys church record, in a subsequent page.]

On the eleventh day of the fifth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Eltisly, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation, that according to order (see p. 240), Cristoph. Marriatt and himself, upon the five and twentieth day of the fourth month, went to Over, to Jane Adams, and speaking with her, desired the reason why she did neglect coming to the meetings. "She said, her husband would not suffer her. He had sworn she should not come, and she was unwilling to make him break his oath. We told her, it was not a sufficient cause to keep her from the meetings; for if he should swear she should do herself mischief, would she obey him? She told us she was minded to seek her peace. We replied, that she ought to seek it lawfully; and seeing he did not hinder her by force, she was in a great fault, for which we reproved her sharply, and also for her breach of promise with the church; using many words to make her sensible of her evil. But she regarded not. Whereupon considering her faults, in—

First, Absenting from the assembly of the church;

Secondly, Not regarding her promises;

Thirdly, Despising and contemning all reproof and admonition:—we delivered her unto Satan, to whom she had yielded herself a servant to obey." The congregation hearing this, were satisfied therewith.

After this it was propounded, whether the threatenings of a husband are a sufficient warrant for a woman to keep from the assemblies. After consideration it was concluded and resolved, that unless a person was restrained by force, it was no excuse for the absenting themselves from the assemblies of the congregation.

After this, according to order, the matter about the election of deacons was taken into consideration. Whereupon it

was resolved, that the thirtieth day of this instant month should be solemnly observed, by fasting and prayer, for that purpose. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name; and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the thirtieth day of the fifth month, it being appointed to be observed, by fasting and prayer, for the election and ordination of a deacon in the church, the elders of the church being together at Eltisly, where the meeting was appointed, and very few of the brethren being present, it did so discourage those that were assembled, that they knew not what to do. But at length remembering the word of the Lord, saying, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them,* it was resolved to proceed. Whereupon, much time being spent in prayer, bewailing our negligence, and craving forgiveness and assistance from the Lord, we then went about to choose one. But our company being so small, it was questioned by some whether it was meet for us to proceed to choose any that day. Whereupon we again sought the Lord for direction. After which we sent four from us to nominate four persons, out of which one should be chosen. Whereupon they did nominate John Tailer, Robt. Jackson, Robt. Cole, and Will. Yarle, some of which were present, and some absent. Whereupon we, being not above four more in company, it was advised, for the better satisfaction, to cast lots to know which of those were chosen by the Lord. Whereupon five lots were made, four of which were blanks, and the other not. That so, if it should please God that none should be chosen at this time, that then they might all have blanks. Which being done, prayer was made to the Lord to order and dispose of them according to his own will. After which the lots were given forth, and the first lot which was given forth was the lot

which was no blank, which fell upon Will. Yarle, who was then received as separated by the Lord. Whereupon the elders prayed and laid their hands on him, appointing him to the office of a deacon in the church. All this being done, praise was again rendered to the Lord.

After which Robt. Jackson informed us that John Blowes was not only absent from us, but that he was this day at a great foot-ball play, he being one of the principal appointers thereof. This being heard, it was concluded a great evil that he should not only be absent from the meeting, but also be instrumental in the appointing such a foolish and wicked matter, and that upon a day which he knew to be set apart by the church for fasting and prayer. Whereupon John Denne was ordered to reprove him for it, and also to certify him, that it was desired that he should be present at the next general meeting, to give an account thereof.

After these things, praise was rendered to the Lord, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the two and twentieth day of the sixth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, the brethren were generally reproved for their negligence at the fast day. After which, relation was made of the appearance of God at that time, which was rehearsed to the praise of the glory of his grace.

After which, John Denne certified the congregation, that according to order, he did reprove John Blowes for his evil, in being absent from the congregation upon the fast day, and being at a foolish foot-ball play, he being one of the principal appointers thereof; and that John Blowes stood to justify his actions; and moreover that he was now present to answer for himself. Whereupon it being adjudged a great evil, he was sharply reproved; nevertheless he stood to justify his

action to be no evil. But it being plainly proved to be a great evil, at length he confessed it, and promised to abstain from the like for the time to come; whereupon some debate was had about the matter, after which it was resolved that, seeing thereby he had—First, Dishonoured the Lord; Secondly, Grieved the people of God; Thirdly, Given great occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully—he should not be suffered to preach, until further fruits meet for repentance did appear.

After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, as breaking of bread, &c., praise was rendered to the Lord, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the third day of the eighth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Eltisley, some time being spent in prayer and exhortation, John Denne certified the congregation of the excommunication of Clemt. Cousin, of Croxton. The cause whereof was as followeth:—he being lately received into the congregation, altogether absented [himself] from the meetings; and not only so, but also often said that he would not come any more at the church. Whereupon on the nineteenth day of the seventh month, John Denne went to him, and told him what was spoken.[7] . . . . .

"After this, upon the eight and twentieth day of the same month, John Denne, meeting with him again, asked him whether he had considered what was spoken to him before. He said, he could not tell. It was then asked, if he did not know his own mind. He said, not always. Then he was again minded of his hypocrisy and dissimulation. But [he] would not give any answer, but only after many words were

[7] [Several lines are here torn off.]

spoken to him, by way of reproof and advice, he replied, that every tub must stand upon his own bottom; which was all that he would say to us. Whereupon, considering his obstinacy in his transgression, he was delivered unto Satan. There were present Tho. Disbrowe, Sarai Gilman, and Anne Gilman." The congregation hearing this relation, were satisfied therewith. After which we proceeded in the practice of the ordinances of God; which being ended, praise was rendered to[8] . . . . . .

On the fourteenth day of the ninth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Fenystanton, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation; the congregation were informed that Anne Johnson had a long time absented herself from the congregation, and although being reproved she often promised to come, yet she broke her promises and came not; and further that she intended to marry an unbeliever, contrary to the advice of the brethren. The congregation hearing this, appointed Edmond Mayle and Will. Woodward, to go unto her to reprove her of those her evils, and to exhort her to come to the congregation to give satisfaction for them.

After this, the congregation were informed by the brethren of Haddenham [Cambridgeshire], that Tho. Sterne continued very obstinate against the ways of God, although he had been so often reproved. And that now he refused to be spoken with, and that he was so far turned aside that he consented to the sprinkling of his child.

The congregation hearing this, and considering how often he had been admonished, resolved that a letter should be sent unto him, to admonish him again of his evil; but withal

[8] [Several lines wanting, being torn off.]

to certify him, that if he did not come to the congregation, and give satisfaction for his offences, he should be excommunicated from the church. John Denne was appointed to write a letter for the same purpose.

After this, the congregation being informed that Mary Coxe was greatly afflicted with heavy temptations, it was desired by her and her parents that a day should be set apart, by fasting to seek the Lord on her behalf; which thing was consented unto, and it was concluded that the eighteenth day of this instant month, should be the time. After these things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so (the day being spent) the assembly were dismissed.

On the eighteenth day of the ninth month, the congregation, according to former order, being assembled, some words were spoken touching the manner of prayer, viz., that it must be—

First. In full assurance of faith.

Second. Free from all wrath and envy.

Third. Continued with all patience and perseverance.

Fourth. For the advancing of the honour of God, and not the lusts of our flesh.

After which the whole day was spent in prayer to the God of heaven.

On the six and twentieth day of the tenth month, at a general meeting of the congregation held at Eltisley, after prayer and supplication to the God of heaven, and some words of doctrine and exhortation, John Denne presented the letter which he was appointed to write to Tho. Sterne, which was as followeth:—

To Tho. Sterne of Hadnam.

Brother,—Your having been formerly joined with us in the

fellowship of the gospel of Jesus Christ, our bowels are as yet yearning after you, wishing earnestly that we might at this time have been silent, and not have had cause to write these lines unto you. Which, being in duty and affection obliged unto, we are bound to present to your serious consideration; that thereby you may be put in mind of your degenerating, and falling back from your former profession; which hath evidently appeared by your forsaking the church of God. Which fault of yours hath been aggravated, in that you have so often broken your promises, when that you have engaged to come to the congregation; not regarding the all seeing God, who taketh no pleasure in the sacrifice of fools, who when they have vowed a vow, regard not to pay it; but as if these were but light things, you have further provoked the Most High, in dishonouring his name by giving consent to the sprinkling of your child, doing that in the name of God, which he doth exceedingly abhor. Insomuch that we cannot but be astonished at those things, for which, in the name of Jesus, we do reprove you, earnestly desiring and entreating you, that you would consider from whence you are fallen and repent. Oh! consider that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who hath said, *No man that layeth his hands to the plough, and looketh back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven.* For God will assuredly recompense our ways upon our own heads. Repent therefore of thine error, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquity by walking closer to the way of God; redeeming the time which thou hast lost, that it may be a prevention of thy destruction; which will be great rejoicing to your brethren, who wish exceedingly the prosperity of your soul. For which purpose, we do again beseech you to return unto the Lord, whom you have forsaken; who is a God of mercy, and will abundantly pardon those that seek unto him. Seek him while he may be found, for he will not always wait. We wish you therefore

to return, and give satisfaction to those whom you have offended. Which, if you do not accomplish by the sixth day of the twelfth month, commonly called February, which will be the general meeting of the congregation at Fenystanton, know that we cannot any longer forbear; but shall separate you from the congregation of Jesus Christ, leaving you unto Satan, by whom you have been taken captive. In the meantime, we desire you to consider of these things, and to repent of thy evil, and pray God that thou mayest be recovered out of the snare of the devil; which will be great joy to those that desire your prosperity in soul and body. Farewell.

From Eltisley, 10th month, 20th day, 1658.

This letter being read, was approved of, and thereupon signed and sent away.

After this, Edmond Mayle certified the congregation, that according to order (see p. 246), Will. Woodward and himself went to Anne Johnson. And coming to her they told her they were sent from the congregation to reprove her for her faults, viz.: — First, for forsaking the assemblies of the church; and, secondly, often breach of promise. "She answered, that she would peradventure come oftener for the time to come. We told her, we were informed that she was resolved to marry an unbeliever, contrary to the advice of the church; for which we did reprove her. She said, that the man whom she intended to marry, was one that did all that was required. We told her, if she could make that appear to us, then she would satisfy us. She said, she would come to the congregation. We asked her, when. She said, she could not tell. We then asked her, if she would come before she was married. She answered, no. We then told her, that it did appear that she desired not to give satisfaction to the church; for it would be to no purpose to come afterwards.

She then said, that if we could prove ourselves to be the church of Christ, she would then come. We told her, that she did acknowledge it, in that she was a member with us, and we did wonder that she should question it. Yet, nevertheless, we told her, that if she would come, it would be proved. And many other words there passed; but they were altogether slighted by her." The congregation hearing this, and considering her great evils, in—

1st. Absenting herself from the assemblies of the congregation:

2nd. Breaking her promises with the church:

3rd. Marrying an unbeliever, contrary to the advice of the church:

4th. Denying the church whereof she is a member:

5th. Slighting and despising all reproof and admonition:—they appointed Edm. Mayle and William Woodward to go to her, and if she remained perverse, to excommunicate her.

After this, the congregation being informed that the book of records was finished, it was thought meet that it should be perused and signed by the officers of the church; and that another book should be provided. For the accomplishing of which, it was resolved to set apart the 27th day of the eleventh month. After which things, and the observation of some ordinances of God, praise was rendered to his name, and so the assembly was dismissed.

[The second book of records here ordered to be provided and kept, does not exist in a separate form. Portions of it, and in a somewhat mutilated state, are found bound up in different parts of the records of the Warboys church, from which the subsequent entries are taken.]

A Register for the Congregation belonging to Caxton, County Cambridge, and Fenystanton, County Huntingdon

All we whose names are hereunder written, are resolved to continue in the administration and participation of all the ordinances which the Lord Jesus hath left with his church to be observed, until his second coming, having been already dipped in water since we believed, and confirmed by the laying on of hands, according to the doctrine of the Lord Jesus; knowing this, that if we continue steadfast and immoveable in the ways of our God unto the end, we shall receive a crown of life; but if we fall therefrom, our names shall be blotted out of the book of life.

	The Names of the Persons	The Place of their Habitation.	The Day, Month, Year, of their Baptism.			What end they make.
	Hen. Denne					
1	Edmund Male	Fenystanton		4	1645	died in the faith.
2	John Denne	Caxton	6	2	1645	
3	James Disbrowe	Eltisley				died in the faith.
4	Tho. Coxe	Fenystanton				
5	Tho. Phillips	Fenystanton				excommunicated.
6	Elizabeth Male	Fenystanton				
7	Anne Coxe	Fenystanton				died in the faith
8	Mary Hall	Caxton				departed from us.
9	Margart. Gray	Caxton				
10	Judith Tailer	Caxton				excommunicated.
11	John Tailer	Caxton	22	10	1651	excommunicated.
12	John Gilman	Eltisley	12	11	1651	died in the faith.
13	Mary Arbrow	Fenystanton	15	11	1651	died in the faith.
14	Richd. Phillips	Fenystanton	29	11	1651	
15	Margart. Phillips	Fenystanton	29	11	1651	died in the faith.
16	Robt. Earle	Fennystanton	29	11	1651	died in the faith.
17	Anne Earle	Fennystanton	29	11	1651	died in the faith.
18	Clemt. Phage	Caxton	8	12	1651	died in the faith.
19	Elizabth. Stevens	Fennydrayton	12	12	1651	excommunicated.
20	Anne Johnson	Fennydrayton	12	12	1651	excommunicated.
21	Crist. Marrat	Hemingfordgray	15	12	1651	died in the faith.
22	Anne Marrat	Hemingfordgray	15	12	1651	
23	Sarai Arbrow	Fennystanton	15	12	1651	died in the faith.
24	Jane Coxe	Fennystanton	15	12	1651	died in the faith.
25	Hen. Browne	Fennystanton	22	12	1651	died in the faith.
26	Anne Browne	Fennystanton	22	12	1651	
27	Will. Phillips	Fennystanton	22	12	1651	died in the faith.
28	Edw. Coxe	Fennystanton	22	12	1651	
29	Robt. Cole	Fennystanton	29	12	1651	
30	John Brighten	Fennystanton	29	12	1651	see page 191.
31	Joan Browne	Cunnington				
32	John Stokely	Warboies				

	The Names of the Persons.	The Place of their Habitation.	The Day, Month, Year, of their Baptism.			What end they make.
33	John Catlin	Ravely Parva				died in the faith.
34	John Rignell	Hemingford Abbot				died in the faith.
35	Alice Rignell	Hemingford Abbot				
36	Hen. Catlin	Ravely Parva	29	12	1651	
37	Tho. Bedford	Fenystanton	2	1	1652	see p. 213.
38	John Peverill	Fenystanton	2	1	1652	excommunicated.
39	Alice Browne	Fenystanton	3	1	1652	
40	Alice Browne	Fenydrayton	2	1	1652	
41	Hen. Smith	Boxworth	3	1	1652	died in the faith.
42	Anne Smith	Boxworth	3	1	1652	see page 220.
43	Will. Woo[d]ward	Fenystanton	3	1	1652	died in the faith.
44	Anne Woodward	Fennystanton	3	1	1652	see page 181.
45	Robt. Bull	Fennydrayton	6	1	1652	died.
46	Mary Gilman	Eltisley	10	1	1652	died in the faith.
47	Sarai Gilman	Eltisley	10	1	1652	died in the faith.
48	Fran. Barnes	Barington	11	1	1652	
49	Tho. Disbrow	Eltisley	12	1	1652	
50	Phill. Marshall	Eltisley	12	1	1652	excommunicated.
51	Hannah Marshall	Eltisley	12	1	1652	
52	Joseph Scrooby	Meldrid	16	1	1652	
53	David Denne	Caxton	16	1	1652	dead.
54	Susan Browne	Papworth Evd.	17	1	1652	
55	Sarah Browne	Papworth Evd.	21	1	1652	
56	Mary Martin	Fenystanton	24	1	1652	
57	Hellen Phillips	St. Ives	28	1	1652	died in the faith.
58	Robt. Stokely	Hadnam	28	1	1652	
59	Elizbth. Barnes	Boxworth	28	1	1652	
60	Margart. Lenington	Caxton	5	2	1652	departed from us.
61	Jer. Aldridge	Papworth Evd.				see page 177.
62	Rebecca Denne	Caxton		10	1644	died in the faith.
63	Martha Barnes	Barington	5	2	1652	
64	John House	Fenystanton	11	2	1652	died in the faith.
65	Anne Stekins	St. Ives	14	2	1652	dead.
66	—— Arbrow	Fenystanton	14	2	1652	
67	Anne Martin	Boxworth	21	2	1652	died in the faith.
68	Jane Barnes	Barington	21	2	1652	excommunicated.
69	John Rich	Yelling				see page 50.
70	Hen. Browne	Fenystanton	28	2	1652	
71	Alice Browne	Fenystanton	28	2	1652	
72	Sarah Stokely	Warboys	9	3	1652	died in the faith.
73	Anne Barnes	Barington	9	3	1652	died in the faith.
74	Edw. Matthew	Hemingford Gray	16	3	1652	died in the faith.
75	Anne Matthew	Fenystanton	16	3	1652	
76	Jane Green	Fenystanton	16	3	1652	see page 210.
77	Bennet Phillips	Fenystanton	16	3	1652	excommunicated.
78	Anne Phillips	Fenystanton	16	3	1652	
79	Anne Allen	Hawson	19	3	1652	
80	Elizabth. Martin	Caxton	19	3	1652	excommunicated.
81	Elizabth. Phage	Caxton	19	3	1652	
82	Edw. Martin	Caxton	25	3	1652	excommunicated.
83	Joane Martin	Caxton	25	3	1652	excommunicated.
84	Anne Allen	Hawson	25	3	1652	
85	Mary Reymund	Hawson	25	3	1652	
86	Joane Newman	Fenystanton	25	3	1652	see page 183.

	The Names of the Persons.	The Place of their Habitation.	The Day, Month Year, of their Baptism.			What end they make.
87	Fran. Matthew	Fenystanton	7	4	1652	
88	Anne Stokely	Warboys	7	4	1652	
89	John Weymor	Gamlingay	12	4	1652	died in the faith.
90	George Michell	Eltisley	13	4	1652	see page 159.
91	Edm. Smith	Wisbich				
92	Mary Smith	Wisbich				died in the faith.
93	Jer. Rose	Many				see page 115.
94	Paul Robinson	Chatteriss				died.
95	Joane Robinson	Chatteriss				died.
96	Edward Timbs	Chatteriss				
97	Anne Timbes	Chatteriss				see page 115.
98	John Dring	Chatteriss				see page 131.
99	Laur. Baysley	Chatteriss				see page 115.
100	Will. Customs	Chatteriss				see page 131.
101	Will. Cowper	Chatteriss				
102	Rich. Blinch	Chatteriss				
103	Mercy Read	Chatteriss				see page 138.
104	And. Hawkins	Chatteriss				see page 115.
105	John Tye	Chatteriss				see page 115.
106	Deborah Dodson	Hemingford Gray	23	4	1652	excommunicated.
107	Owen Taylor	Burne	3	5	1652	died in the faith.
108	John Blowes	Burne	3	5	1652	excommunicated.
109	George Redman	Warboys	12	7	1652	excommunicated.
110	Will. Askew	Warboys				
111	Robt. Parrat	Warboys				died.
112	Elizabth. Gowler	Cone				see page 116.
113	Elizabth. Browne	Sandy				died in the faith.
114	Will. Eppings	Sutton				see p. 130.
115	Margt. Eppings	Sutton				see p. 130.
116	Philip Eppins	Sutton				see p. 130.
117	Judah Westland	Sutton				
118	Jane Purcase	Sutton				died in the faith.
119	Francis Gilman	Eltisley	24	9	1652	died in the faith.
120	Robt. Jackson	Burne	19	10	1652	died in the faith.
121	James Caucot	Burne	19	10	1652	
122	Joseph Gilman	Papworth Evd.	25	10	1652	died in the faith.
123	Ann Gilman	Papworth Evd.	25	10	1652	
124	Will. Smith	Caxton	4	11	1652	died in the faith.
125	Leonard Crane	Gamlingay	30	3	1653	died in the faith.
126	Margt. Holder	Burne	1	4	1653	
127	Mary Whittock		22	3	1653	
128	Alice Huet		8	4	1653	departed from us.
129	Will. Homes		18	5	1653	
130	Will. Stallibrass		23	7	1653	
131	Grace Barber	Burne	19	8	1653	
132	Ellen Newlin	Burne	26	8	1653	
133	Fran. Holmes	Shelford Magna	22	9	1653	
134	Mary Green	Shelford Magna	22	9	1653	
135	Robt. Pate (?)	Hawson	22	9	1653	died in the faith.
136	Mary Smith	Holywell				died in the faith.
137	Nico. Clarke	Stukely				dead.
138	Robt Lack	Hemingford Gray	24	9	1653	see p. 207.
139	Alice Lack	Hemingford Gray	24	9	1653	
140	Margart. Townesend	Hemingford Gray	24	9	1653	dead.

	The Names of the Persons.	The Place of their Habitation.	The Day, Month, Year, of their Baptism.			What end they make.
141	Hen. Phillips	Fenystanton	22	10	1653	excommunicated.
142	Joane Parker		22	10	1653	see p. 168.
143	Jane Johnson	Caxton	20	11	1653	see p. 174.
144	John Barnes	Hemingford Gr.	28	11	1653	see p. 209.
145	Rebecka Denne	Eltisley	30	11	1653	died in the faith.
146	Mary Matthew	Fenystanton	11	12	1653	dead.
147	Susanna House	Fenystanton	19	12	1653	died in the faith.
148	Mary Coxe	Fenystanton	19	12	1653	
149	Roger Walkwood	St. Ives	27	1	1654	see p. 157.
150	John Noble	Fenystanton		4	1654	see p. 217.
151	Margrt. Noble	Fenystanton		4	1654	see p. 219.
152	Joan Phillips	Fenystanton		4	1654	
153	Elizabth. Noble	Fenystanton		6	1654	excommunicated.
154	Tho. Green	Fenystanton	22	7	1654	see p. 218.
155	Saml. Grumit	Fenystanton	2	9	1654	
156	Mary Cole	Cunnington		9	1654	died in the faith.
157	Rich. Beamont	Fenystanton		5	1655	died in the faith.
158	Elias Woodward	Hadnam		5	1655	dead.
159	— Presents	Hadnam		5	1655	
160	Isabell. Yarle	Gransden Mag		5	1655	
161	Will. Yarle	Gransden Mag		5	1655	
162	Will. Slow	Gransden Mag		5	1655	
163	Jane Adams	Over		6	1655	excommunicated.
164	John Marshal	Over		6	1655	excommunicated.
165	Amy Alpress	Fenystanton	28	7	1655	excommunicated.
166	John Salmon	Fenystanton		10	1655	see p. 191.
167	Fran. Addams	Over	27	2	1656	see p. 216.
168	Sarai Wolman	Over	27	2	1656	
169	Fran. Ashman	Over	4	3	1656	
170	Will. Cranford	Over	27	2	1656	dead.
171	Alce Cranford	Over	7	3	1656	
172	Mary Martin	Fenystanton	9	3	1656	died in the faith.
173	Anne Whitehead	Fenystanton	9	3	1656	died in the faith.
174	Margt. Weyman	Over	11	3	1656	see p. 193.
175	Margt. Asplin	Hadnam	12	5	1656	
176	Mary Presents	Hadnam	'12	5	1656	dead.
177	Alce Manfield	Fenystanton		4	1656	excommunicated.
178	Anne Mathew	Fenystanton		4	1656	
179	Mary Mathew	March (?)	22	Septem.	1690	
180	John Martin	Fenstanton	3	Septem.	1691	
181	Ann Martin	Fenstanton	3	Septem.	1691	
182	Mary Bemont	Hemingford	5	Septem.	1691	
183	Sary Beamont	Fenstanton	5	Novem.	1691	
184	Martha Atley	Hemingford	10	April	1692	

*** The entries in the last column were all made at a date later than the list of names.

ANNO DOMINI, 1676.

Upon the 29th day of August, the congregation, taking into serious consideration the remissness that hath been too

long in the church concerning the due punishing offenders, whereby our hands have been weakened, have now resolved to look more strictly thereinto, knowing that due execution of judgment is well pleasing in the sight of our God; and therefore, in the first place, resolved to take an account of the present members of this congregation, the names of whom are hereafter noted.

1. Edmund Mayle, of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
2. John Denne, of St. Ives . . . . . died in the faith.
3. Thom. Coxe, of Fenystanton . . . . . died in the faith.
4. Robt. Cole, of Fenystanton } Deacons . died in the faith.
5. Willm. Yarle, of Holliwell }
6. John Lacy, of Fenystanton . . . . . excommunicated.
7. Elizabeth Mayle, of Fenystanton . . . died in the faith.
8. Rich. Phillips, of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
9. Anne Marriatt, of Hemingford Abbott . died in the faith.
10. Anne Stoakely of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
11. Joan Browne, of Cunnington . . . . . died in the faith.
12. Alice Rignell, of Hemingford Gray . . died in the faith.
13. Alice Browne, of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
14. Alice Presents, of Haddenham.
15. Hannah Marshall, of Eason.
16. Henry Browne, of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
17. Alice Browne, senr. of Fenystanton . . . died in the faith.
18. Franc. Matthew, of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
19. Willm. Cooper, of Chatteris.
20. Willm. Stallibrass, of Over.
21. Alice Lack, of Hemingford Gray.
22. Mary Matthews, of Fenystanton.
23. Rich. Beamont, of Hemingford Abbott.
24. Willm. Presents, of Hadnam . . . . . died in the faith.
25. Isabell Yarle, of Holliwell . . . . . died in the faith.
26. Alice Cranford of Over.
27. Sam. Elliott, of St. Ives.
28. Elizabeth Elliott, of St. Ives . . . . . died in the faith.
29. Mary Denne, of St. Ives.
30. Joane Alud, of St. Ives . . . . . died in the faith.
31. Rebecka Beadly, of St. Ives.
32. ——— Heward, of Holliwell.
33. Sarai Yarle, of Holliwell . . . . . died in the faith.
34. Thom. Richmond, of Cone.
35. John Lacy, of Hemingford Grey . . . . died in the faith.
36. Anne Lacy, of Hemingford Grey.
37. Willm. Raven, of Hemingford Grey . . died in the faith.
38. Alice Raven, of Hemingford Grey.
39. Thom. Toller, of Hemingford Grey . . . died in the faith.
40. Ann Toller, of Hemingford Grey.
41. John Raven, of Hemingford Abbott.
42. Rachel Raven, of Hemingford Abbott.
43. Rich. Warring, of Hemingford Abbott . . died in the faith.
44. Anne Warring, of Hemingford Abbott . . died in the faith.
45. John Marriatt, of Hemingford Abbott . . died in the faith.
46. Roger Chrismas, of Hemingford Abbott . died in the faith.

47. Jane Chrismas, of Hemingford Abbott. . died in the faith.
48. Rich. Croxton, of Gormanchester . . . died in the faith.
49. —— Croxton, of Gormanchester.
50. John Webster, of Gormanchester.
51. Widd. Fowler, of Gormanchester.
52. Mary Arnold, of Gormanchester.
53. Anne Mason, of Gormanchester.
54. Anne Fox, of Gormanchester . . . . . excommunicated.
55. Mary Earle, of Gormanchester . . . . excommunicated.
56. James Whitehead, of Gormanchester.
57. —— Bennett, of Gormanchester.
58. —— Cross, of Gormanchester.
59. —— Birch, of Godmanchester.
60. —— Birch, of Godmanchester.
61. John Webster, of Stukely Magna.
62. Mary Lindsey, of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
63. Sarai Stoakely, of Fenystanton . . . . died in the faith.
64. Charity Coxe, of Fenystanton . . . . . died in the faith.
65. Mary Browne, of Fenystanton.
66. Willm. Whitehead, of Fenystanton . . . died in the faith.
67. Mary Howse, of Fenystanton.
68. Arthur Pearmaine, of Fenystanton . . . died in the faith.
69. Lewis Audley of Gerton.
70. Susan She[r]wood, of Cambridge . . . . excommunicated.
71. Rebecka Denne, of St. Ives . . . . . separated from the assembly.
72. Phillip Stalibrass, of Hoton.
73. Mary Audley, of Gerton. . . . . died in the faith.
74. William Hoar [?] of Cooten.
75. Susan Hoar [?] of Cooten.
76. Mary Smith, of Cooten.
77. Deborah Peverill, of Fenstanton . . . died in the faith.
78. Mary Denne, jun., of St. Ives.
79. Elizabeth Mayle, jun. of Fenystanton . . died in the faith.
80. Elizabeth Cole, of Fenystanton.
81. Willm. Townesend, of Fenystanton . . . died in the faith.
82. John Martin, of Fenstanton.
83. Ann Martin, of Fenstanton.
84. Mary Beamont, of Hemingford.

. . . . . of bread, and that she answered them that she was not at all times fit for that service, and that she was so unfit at the last meeting for the purpose, that she could not stay. It was then demanded by himself and Rich. Beamont (appointed also for that purpose), what the cause of her unfitness was, that she might be assisted in the removal thereof. She then answered, positively, that she would not tell them, or any other, withal charging the church with want of love. The church hearing this, did conclude that she was guilty of great contempt; and therefore it was resolved, that the said persons should go to her again to reprove her for the same, and to

admonish her to appear in person at the next meeting upon this occasion.

7. Concerning Susan Sherwood, it was reported by Edm. Mayle and Willm. Whitehead that they went to her according to order, and that, finding her to slight the admonition and not to regard the church, they did excommunicate her; wherein the church was satisfied.

8. It was reported by Edm. Mayle and Rich. Beamont that, according to order, they went to Rebecka Denne, and that finding her to persist in her faults and to slight the church in their reproofs and admonitions, they did excommunicate her; which the church did approve of.

9. It was reported by Sam. Elliott that, according to order, Rich. Beamont and himself went to Jno. Lacy, the elder, and they declared that he was resolved to stand to whatsoever he had said concerning the church or any members; whereupon the matter was seriously again considered, and he was adjudged guilty of great evil in manifesting so great malice, and endeavouring to make a rent and schism in the church. And further, concerning his wife's excommunication, which was one of the things he charged the church with doing unjustly in, the church being well satisfied, as before declared; concerning that, it was determined that therein he was a false accuser, and should be reproved for the same.

2ndly, Whereas he accused the church of partiality concerning a difference between Robert Cole and his wife, the church therein also determined that he was a false accuser, and should be reproved for the same.

3rdly Whereas also he himself declared apparent untruths in the face of the congregation concerning his said wife, it was determined that he should be reproved for the same; and—

4thly, Whereas he was pleased, with much malice and anger, in the face of the church, to speak evil of br. Denne and to rail against him, and particularly to charge him with

breach of promises, with taking tithes, with going to hear a minister of the church of England; the church hereupon did, and hereby do judge the said John Lacy guilty of hypocrisy and evil speaking, in that he therein condemneth himself, in allowing and being guilty of the same things; and concerning breach of promise abundantly more, he often promising what he never intended to perform. And—

5thly, Whereas the said John Lacy did also, with much malice and anger, in the face of the church, accuse br. Mayle for encroaching upon and detaining another man's ground; the church did in that thing also adjudge the said John Lacy guilty of great evil as aforesaid, in that he allowed the same in himself, he being frequently guilty of encroaching upon divers men's lands, and also of country and highways. And—

6thly, Whereas, notwithstanding these things, in much rage he did in the face of the church declare that he would have no communion with them; the premises considered, and since, yet he resolved to stand thereto, the church therein adjudged him guilty of pride and malice, endeavouring as aforesaid to make a rent and schism as much as in him lieth; and therefore resolved that he should be sharply reproved for the same, and that also he should be admonished to appear in person at the next meeting, to be observed for that purpose; and accordingly Henry Browne and Willm. Whitehead were appointed to go to him to perform the same.

And concerning Edm. Mayle, the church inquiring into the matter were satisfied therein; and the accusation as aforesaid appeared unjust. After these things it was appointed that we should meet again upon the 22nd of November next; and then, after prayer to God, the assembly was dismissed.

On the two and twentieth [day] of November, according to former determination, we met at Fenstanston, where, after prayer to God for counsel, the following things were considered, viz.:—

1. Concerning Rebecka Bradley. It was declared that there being some indisposition of body and mind in her, it was not thought convenient to reprove her as before determined; and thereupon it was resolved to wait upon her, &c.

2. Information was given by br. Mayle that the brethren at Godmanchester were visited as appointed, and that particularly there appeared a great fault between Richard Croxton and his wife, viz.: such contention as hindered their having fellowship with the church; for which, as they were reproved, so it was determined that they should be again reproved for their evil.

3. It was reported to the church that Willm. Cooper had been several times at Warboys, and declared also his resolution to continue with the church in the ways of God; wherein the church was satisfied.

4. Robt. Cole and Hen. Browne did inform the church that they had been with Willm. Stallibrass, and that upon their declaring their errand he was very angry, and declared he would never come to the church again: for he would not give an account of his actions, nor suffer himself to be so lorded over; which was adjudged a great evil, and it was resolved that he should be informed of his error, and admonished of the evil; and Edm. Mayle and Robt. Cole were desired to perform the same.

5. The church was informed that John Lacy the younger hath been from home, out of the country, since the last meeting; whereupon it was resolved that the first opportunity should be taken to perform the former determination.

6. Concerning Jane Chrismas it was reported, that since her former admonition, notwithstanding her peremptory words then used, she manifested her submission, and frequently waited at the assemblies; whereupon the church was satisfied.

7. Concerning John Lacy the elder, he appeared in person

according to desire; and after some debate he desired a copy of those things laid to his charge; and he promised to consider thereof, and to give his answer. Whereupon it was granted that he should have a copy; and further it was declared that the church was contented to refer the deciding of the matters whereof he was accused, to any two messengers or elders whom he should choose. After this, prayer was made to God and so the assembly was dismissed.

On the 27th day of December, according to former determination, we met at Fenystanton, where, after prayer to God for counsel and understanding, these following things were considered, viz.:

1. Concerning Rebecka Bradley, it was resolved that the former determination concerning her reproof and admonition should be performed.

2. Concerning Rich. Croxton and his wife, as before it had been determined that they should be reproved for suffering such contention between themselves, as to hinder their having fellowship with the church at this time, Edm. Mayle and Rich. Beamont were appointed to perform the same.

3. Concerning Willm. Stallibrass, Edm. Mayle reported that, according to order, he spake with him, and that he then seemed much more gentle than as was before informed, and promised to come to the church; whereupon it was resolved that we should yet wait upon him.

4. Concerning John Lacy the younger, he being present at the day and place aforesaid, first, upon this admonition he observed, that the going of John Denne to hear a public minister at Lynn, was the cause of his absenting [himself] from church fellowship. To this it was answered by John Denne, being there present, that therein he was willing to give satisfaction, either at that present or at any other time, or before any other persons. But secondly, it was answered

that John Denne was absent at the time when the aforesaid neglect was; and therefore if there was a fault in the said John Denne, it was no lawful let or impediment toward his having fellowship with the rest.. . . . . .

. . . . . adding yet farther, that there were other reasons for his then refusal to have fellowship with the church, as that he was unprepared; that some brethren were offended with him, &c. Whereupon he was exhorted to serious consideration, and admonished to deal uprightly with God, the church, and his own conscience, &c.

5. Concerning John Lacy the elder, the ensuing note or letter was received from him; viz.:—

For John Denne and Edmund Mayle.

I have often pondered in my heart that division and strife that hath been between us. I have considered also and pondered the cause, if I be not mistaken; and I dread to see that dreadful consequence that doth and will unavoidably follow. Therefore if [perhaps] it may be prevented, I thought myself at [length] obliged to desire you to appoint your time, and to desire brother Stanley, brother Morley, brother [Spence,] and br. Bissell to have timely notice to judge and determine, if they can, all differences between us; so I desire to know your mind by this bear[er in] a line or two. I remain,

JOHN LACY.

This being read and taken into consideration, it was resolved that John Lacy aforesaid is gui[lty of] slighting the church, in refusing to give his an[swer to] the matters objected against him . . . . .

. . . . upon the delivery of the copy of his [accu]sation, and as was thereupon this day expected: also it was adjudged, that he did greatly slight the church in desiring

that the aforementioned, should have the judgment and determination of the matters in difference referred to them, &c.

Howbeit, the church, being willing to condescend so far as equity and justice might permit, did resolve to send a note to John Lacy, to signify the same, and accordingly this ensuing note was sent by his son; viz.:—

To John Lacy the elder.

We have received yours, which we have considered; and that nothing may be wanting in us for the reconciliation of the differences depending between yourself and us, according to truth and equity, we are contented, and do desire those brethren you mention may have the hearing thereof; whereof you are desired to inform them, and that for the same purpose we have appointed to meet at Fenystanton, on the last day of January next.

We remain, yours to serve you,

John Raven,	Willm. Yarle,
John Denne,	John Mariatt,
Edmond Mayle,	Robt. Cole,
Willm. Whitehead,	Rich. Beaumont,
Thom. Coxe,	Francis Matthew.

Dec. 27, '76.

After this, prayer was rendered to God, and so the assembly was dismissed; the meeting being appointed to be next, on the last day of January as aforesaid.

At a monthly meeting, it was agreed by the church to withdraw communion from John Lacy the elder, until he give satisfaction according to the determination of the brethren at the last monthly meeting, and to the church for [his dis]orderly dealing, and abusing brother Denne, and likewise to brother Denne for abusing him, and likewise satisfaction to his daughter.

October the 31*st*, 1677.

The church taking into consideration the long absence of Mary Earle and Anne Fox from the assembly of the church, notwithstanding they have been often admonished, and have promised to come, yet have neglected and dissembled: the church did resolve to separate them from the assembly, and to have no more communion with them until they repent, and give satisfaction for their wickedness.

The church have appointed brother Mayle and brother Cole to declare the church's determination to them.

It is also agreed that the said brethren shall go to John Webster, to know the reason of his long absence.

The church taking into consideration that [for] a long time they had withdrawn communion from John Lacy the elder, for that he did not give satisfaction according to the determination of the brethren, and according [to h]is own promise, nor according to the determination of the church in giving satisfaction to brother Denne for abusing him, and likewise satisfaction to his daughter; but hath neglected [it,] and further hath aggravated his evil, in refusing to put the difference between himself and brother Cole, about the bank, either to brethren or to any other indifferent persons, the church in consideration of these great evils do determine to separate him from their assembly, and to have no more communion with him until he repent, and bring forth fruits of amendment of life.

At the same meeting, upon the one and thirtieth day of October, Rebekah Andrews of St. Ives, who was formerly separated from the church for marrying out of the church, did at the assembly confess and acknowledge she had done evil, in that she had offended the Lord in so doing, and that she had done evil in offending the brethren, and did desire the brethren to forgive her, with many tears. The assembly

did take it into consideration, accept of her repentance, and receive her into fellowship again.

The fifteenth day of May, 1687, brother John Lacy was received into fellowship by the consent of the congregation, having giving them satisfaction.

EDMOND MAYLE.

January 19*th*, 1694.

John Cropper was baptized by Luke Copeland, deacon of the church of Christ at Spalding in Lincolnshire, in the year of our Lord 1694, and in the 22nd year of his age, January 19. Observe, it was at that time a hard frost and deep snow, and yet no hurt ensued. God will be honoured in his own ways, and protect his servants in the obeying of his commands. Let none be afraid to venture into the water when the season is cold, lest they be laid in their graves before the weather be warm.

JOHN CROPPER,
Senior Elder.

THE RECORDS

OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST

AT

WARBOYS.

The Book of Records of the Church of Warboys, since the time of their first gathering together, with their proceedings, and order of times, and other Memorials.

The names of those first stirred up were William Dunn, John Richards, John Ward; to which were added, John Kidson and William Askew, before baptized.

Note.—That the year begins on the month commonly called March.

THE RECORDS, ETC.

1644.

Mystery, Babylon, or the great whore, spoken of by the blessed apostle John in the Revelation, with whom the inhabitants of the earth have committed fornication, had so deceived the nations of the world, that although something had been done in this nation by way of reformation, yet so great was the darkness, that few knew in what manner churches ought to be gathered and governed, according [to] the scriptures and practice of the holy apostles and churches in their time.[1] It pleased God about this time to stir up some in this town to search the scriptures; and by the Lord's providence, one Henry Denn, an able and learned teacher, did by preaching and writing,[2] manifest the great love of

[1] [Thus the celebrated Kiffin writes: "It is a thing of sad consequence to consider how we have been kept under blindness and darkness, although not totally, yet in a great measure, in regard of such truths as do immediately strike at antichrist and his false power. As namely this great truth,—Christ the king of his church; and that Christ hath given this power to his church, not to a hierarchy, neither to a national presbytery, but to a company of saints in a congregational way. Now these truths strike directly at antichrist, and therefore [are] kept and quelled down as errors."—*Preface to a Glimpse of Sion's Glory*, 4to. 1641.]

[2] [The earlier annalist, (See Introd.) relates this event as follows: "Then receiving a book of Henry Denn's, called 'The Doctrine of John the Baptist,' we began to see some light in it. Then we heard of Henry Denn's coming to Stanton, of whom we were satisfied, and resolved to continue in the truth of the gospel." The extracts from the earlier annalist, in the text are marked thus*.]

God the Father to mankind, in giving his only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for every man; and further declaring that whosoever did believe in him and repent of their sins, ought to be dipped in water (which is baptism), and from thenceforth to walk all their days in obedience to the holy scriptures; declaring such to be the church of God. And by the preaching of the said Henry Denn, many in this county received the faith, of whom some were of this town; who, considering that lest Eusebius Hunt, parish teacher of Warboys, should be offended at it, thought good to acquaint him with it; and finding an opportunity when he had sprinkled an infant, one William Dunn told him he had no ground for so doing in the scriptures, but it was a tradition of man, desiring him to take it into consideration and leave it. Eusebius Hunt said, he would dispute it. Whereupon Henry Denn being sent for, came to Warboys, accompanied with sundry of the brethren; and Henry Denn preached in the public meeting places,[3] who confirmed them much in the truth of the gospel. Afterwards Henry Denn was desired to come again, who, after a long dispute with Eusebius Hunt, Henry Denn demanded whether he judged it best to sprinkle infants, or let them alone. Eusebius Hunt answered, to let them alone. Henry Denn said, surely we are to do the best way.[4] William Dunn, with the rest, being resolved to join with Henry Denn, acquainted him of their mind, who exhorted them not to delay [the] time of their baptism. Not long after, these, by name, were baptized; William Dunn, John Richards, John Ward, John Kidson, William Askew.

1647.

They continued in the apostles' doctrine, and breaking of

[3] ["In the stone-house," says the earlier writer; that is, in the parish church.]

[4] [John Matthews preached in the "stone-house" on this occasion. — *Ibid.*]

bread and prayers, assembling often with the church at Fenystanton; but by reason of the great opposition they had in going to Fenystanton, by the rude people of Fenystanton and St. Ives, William Dunn said, Let us have their advice at Fenystanton about some to carry on the work of the gospel, and administer the ordinances among us. Whereupon, advising with John Matthews, a teacher in the church at Fenystanton, he answered after this manner; "Seeing that three of you use to teach the word, my advice is that you cast lots for one overseer and one deacon." Which being agreed upon, they five aforesaid, together with William Bass and John Palmer, of Pidly, cast lots. The lot fell on William Dunn for an overseer, and John Richards for a deacon.[5] The rest were content therewith.

1648.

*In this year Henry Dunn and Richard Savill were baptized. The Diggers begin their work of digging the commons and heath-grounds. About this time, Gerard Winstanley prophesies that Israel must go free, and how the Lord would destroy all that oppose the work of making the earth a common treasury. A people called Levellers in these times, of whom one George Foster declares himself to be a prophet, and prophesies that the time was then that God would love all men, and rich men should cast their gold and silver about the streets. He was carried into high raptures and pretended things that proved false.[6] The Ranters began

[5] ["Then said brother Palmer, 'Now hath the Lord answered our desires, for our desires were for him. I hope you are all content.' They all answered, 'Yea, we are all content.'" —*Ibid.*]

[6] [These men first appeared in Surrey, "digging the ground and sowing it with roots and beans." There were thirty of them at first, of whom one Everard and Winstanley were the chief. They came before the general to justify themselves. Everard said, he was one of the race of the Jews; that since the times of William the Conqueror, liberty was

their ranting about this time, of whose wicked practices we were too well acquainted with.

1649.

*In this year we continued in the apostles' doctrine, and many hearers there were to hear the word of God.

1650.

Now began the churches too much to listen to the errors of the times, viz.: of certain people called Diggers, Levellers, and Ranters. And the devil was not wanting to tempt the dear children of God to those strange errors, insomuch that several churches were so shaken that most of our Christian assemblies were neglected or broken up.[7]

1651.

Now began there again to be some returning to the Lord, the Lord stirred up the hearts of the brethren at Fenystanton. The elders there seek up their members,[8] and

lost, and "the people of God had lived under tyranny and oppression worse than that of our forefathers under the Egyptians. But now the time of deliverance was at hand; and God would bring his people out of this slavery, and restore them to their freedom in enjoying the fruits and benefits of the earth. And that there had lately appeared to him (Everard) a vision; which bade him arise, and dig, and plough the earth, and receive the fruits thereof. That their intent is to restore the creation to its former condition,...to distribute the benefit thereof to the poor and needy, and to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. That they intend not to meddle with any man's property,...but only to meddle with what is common and untitled, and to make it fruitful for the use of man."—*Whitelocke's Memorials*, p. 384; *Carlyle's Cromwell*, i. p. 433.]

[7] [The Quakers appear to have gathered largely, especially from among the baptists. Says G. Fox, in 1654: "The presbyterians, independents, and baptists were in a great rage; for many of their people came to be turned to the Lord Jesus Christ, and sat down under his teachings, and received his power, and felt it in their heart; and then they were moved of the Lord to declare against the rest of them."—*Journal*, i. 245. "A great shatter is among all the forms and gathered churches, as they are called, and many are inquiring after the truth."—*A. Parker to Marg. Fell, in Letters of Early Friends*, p. 30.]

[8] [See before, p. 1.]

came to Warboys for the same purpose, to exhort and admonish us to return to the Lord.

1652.

We began again to exhort one another to return to our first love, and though we had much opposition, yet through the strength of the Lord we did prevail. We called our members to know whether they would go on to join. To such as joined with us we gave the right hand of fellowship. Much trouble about John Ward, but at length he was received into fellowship again; but some that formerly joined with us in assembling and fellowship fell into very strange errors, as John Palmer and John Yule, who at length for his heresy was by the elders of Stanton delivered to Satan. Yet it pleased God, nevertheless, that some were added to the church.

1653.

This year, there being many hearers, the word of the Lord so prevailed, that many believed in the Lord and were added to the church.

*In this year the church begins to flourish again, and blessed be God [is] set in reasonable good order, though with some loss of our members, who by reason of the several opinions and errors of the times were drawn away, as John Palmer. John Erle sometimes joined with us. But more fell off in other fellowships than in this. God through his mercy added such to the church this year, as that they continued in the faith.

1654.

Some added to the church. The doctrine of laying on of hands on each particular Christian received, and several of the brethren received under laying on of hands by the

elders of Fenystanton, who came for that work to Warboys to us.

1655.

Some added to the church. A choice of elders and deacons was made by the brethren here. Two elders were chosen, viz.: William Dunn and Thomas Chapman; and two deacons were chosen, viz.: Richard Hawkins and John Stokley. And these elders and deacons were ordained by laying on of hands, by John Denn and Edmond Mayle, elders and overseers of Stanton, who were appointed to do it by a council at Cambridge. John Kitson, who differed from the church, was again reconciled unto them. The order of love-feast agreed upon, to be before the Lord's supper; because the ancient churches did practise it, and for unity with other churches near to us.[9]

1656.

Some baptized this year. The church, considering the long absence of John Ward from the assembly, and sending to enquire the cause found his heart turned from the truth, affirming the scriptures to be a dead letter,[1] also holding

[9] [The earlier writer thus states these reasons: "First, For unity with the neighbour churches. Secondly, Because it is lawful to eat together. Thirdly, We see it convenient that they that come from other places should eat with us. But it is our liberty to break bread without it. Fourth reason: because there is some ground in the scripture for it, and the Saviour did practise it." Edwards says that love-feasts were observed by many sectaries in London, and thus states the principle of them:—"That love-feasts, or feasts of love (with which the Lord's supper is to be administered also), is a perpetual ordinance of Christ, at which only church members are to be present, and to partake." — *Gangræna*, 1st Part, p. 27, edit. 1646.]

[1] [Among the heresies of the time, Edwards places the following:—"That the scriptures cannot be said to be the word of God; there is no word but Christ, the scriptures are a dead letter; and no more to be credited than the writings of men; not divine, but human invention."—*Gangræna*, Part i. p. 15.]

baptism with water to be nothing, denying to have fellowship with us. He was admonished the first and second time; at length he was delivered to Satan, for these things:—

Firstly. For affirming the scriptures to be a dead letter.

Secondly. For holding baptism to be of none effect.

Thirdly. For neglecting assembling and refusing admonition; for vindicating that wicked men have the kingdom of God in them, and other strange opinions.

* In this year, James Nailor, called Quaker, professing himself to be Christ, many do homage to him near Bristol; he riding to the city on a white horse, some before him and some behind him cut down branches from the trees, and cry hosanna. For which things he was had to London, was proclaimed blasphemer, and was punished.[2]

John Kitson, being several times admonished by the order of the church, was at length delivered to Satan for these things:—

First. For forsaking assembling, and contemning the church.

Second. For calling the words of God darkness, and calling the ordinances of Christ foolish things, and many such like things.

1657.

Some baptized about this time. At a love feast, and when the Lord's supper was held, it was agreed that such members as were worthy of reproof should be sent to and admonished, viz., Judith Kitson, Mary Poulter, and John Pettifor. At

[2] [Sewell, in his History of the Quakers, gives a full account of this wild enthusiast, i. 233—241. The parliamentary proceedings occupy a large space in Burton's Diary, i. 10—183; ii. 119, 133. Hubberthorne, a fellow quaker, writing to Mary Fell on the 11th Nov., says, "That power of darkness in the women rules over him, as I wrote to thee at the first." The quakers universally blamed and discountenanced Nayler's doings, and only after a recantation received him again into their body.—Letters of Early Friends, &c. p. 45.]

length Judith Kitson, for neglecting to assemble with the church, following the errors of those people called Quakers, and refusing admonition, was withdrawn from.

Mary Poulter, for forsaking the assembling with the church, and neglecting holy duties, and walking disorderly in pride and vanity, was withdrawn from.

John Richardson, for being yoked in marriage with one not in the fellowship of the gospel with us, though admonished to the contrary by the church, and for other vain and disorderly walkings, was withdrawn from.

* Also Juda Kidson, wife of John Kidson, was withdrawn from, for these ensuing reasons;—for neglecting of the assembling herself with the church; for following the Quakers; refusing admonition, &c.

John Dunn, living some time at London and coming from thence, afterwards by a letter sent from the brethren assembling at Tower Hill meeting, was accused for unjust dealing with Mary ——, servant to John Barber a brother, in pretending to marry her, manifested by his hiring a house to dwell in and after leaving her, was admonished of his evil, and desired to go to London, and be reconciled to her and the brethren there.

* With much trouble about things spiritual and temporal, we end this year. Pray we for more love and unity.

1658.

* This year presents us with many troubles both at home and abroad—heart-burnings and grudgings. The Lord remove the cause that the effect may cease.

William Dunn, notwithstanding the letter sent against John Dunn, did much defend the cause of John Dunn, and spake against the brethren at London, not receiving their accusation; and also bare with John Richardson in his marriage with one not in the fellowship of the gospel, and

also for holding it lawful for us to hear the priests. These things occasioned much trouble to the brethren, and caused them to send for the elders of Stanton, Edmund Mayle and John Denn. And being called to account before them for his unsoundness in the faith, and the things aforesaid, after nearly two hours' speech betwixt him and them, he was desired to repent by them and the brethren. At length, being by those elders entreated to it as a father (all which he refusing), he was by them put from his degree of being an elder. Afterwards, refusing and forsaking the assembling with the church, he was withdrawn from.[3]

John Dunn, altogether refusing to go to London, and to be reconciled to Mary aforesaid, and the brethren at London, was withdrawn from.

John Richardson, acknowledging his offences and repenting, was received into the church again.

About this time, John Pettifor, for forsaking the assembling with us, and declaring his resolution always so to do, was withdrawn from.

Ann Gibson, for marrying with one not in the fellowship of the gospel, and forsaking the church, was withdrawn from.

George Redman, for marrying with a woman not in the fellowship of the gospel, was withdrawn from.

[3] [The earlier writer, who is doubtless William Dunn himself, thus records this event:—"Thomas Chapman accuseth William Dunn for one not sound in the faith. Three accusations laid to his charge; 1. For holding with priests; 2. For vindicating John Dunn's London business; 3. For not bridling of his tongue. That which he said touching the priests was, he said one time to two or three of them, that he thought men had better hear some of the priests than to sit at home not employed in any service to God. 2ndly. He said, he found the letter against John Dunn to be but suppositions. 3rdly. The not bridling of his tongue, because he said they were but suppositions; though he durst appear to any whom they have not prevailed over. But the major part being set against us, John Dunn withdrawn from. William Dunn degraded and withdrawn from."—See Fenstanton Records, p. 237.]

1659.

* William Dunn and John Dunn continued this whole year not joining with any people, though the Quakers do much desire them to hear them. Surely if they had been so unsound in the faith as their accuser accuseth them, they might have had opportunities enough, besides the invitations of the Quakers. But lest some should say that I write this in my own defence, I have but only set down the particulars, leaving others to judge of them, as God shall direct them. So, with love to the truth, though separated from them whom I have diligently cared for, I kept this year.[4]

1659.

* This year presents us still with a great deal of strife in many things, but some labour to subdue them. William Dunn desires they and he might agree again, which, to manifest his love to the truth, offers agreement; but [it] could not be [accomplished]. Whereupon they differ again, and the rent is made worse than before. It is too much to set down the particulars.

* General Lambert now goes down into the north to meet Monk. They carry the matter contrary to expectation. Lambert throws up his commission; is taken prisoner. Monk comes up to London; calls a parliament; votes for the king.[5] The Quakers imprisoned for preaching; but still they remain valiant.[6] Thus with much trouble in many things we end this year, with a great deal of discontent.

[4] [From this paragraph it would appear that the writer of the earlier portion of the records was William Dunn himself. On his final separation from the church, they were re-written by his successor.]

[5] [Lambert proceeded to the north, Nov. 3, was confined to Holmby, Jan. 26, and committed to the Tower on the 6th March, but subsequently escaped. Parliament met on the 25th April, 1660, and Charles II. was proclaimed on the 8th May.—Whitelocke, pp. 688, 695, 698, 699, 701, 703.]

[6] [The Quakers presented to the Speaker of the House of Commons,

1660.

*William Dunn shews his willingness to join with them, and therefore writes a paper and sends to them; but we agree not. The king comes to the crown again, and [is] proclaimed. He sends a declaration from Amsterdam, wherein he grants liberty in matters of God's worship.[7]

1661.

The king gets out a declaration to suppress the meetings that are for God's worship.[8] Multitudes in the jail. The churches now brake up their meetings, like men unwilling to bear the cross of Christ, too [great] an evil to be permitted. For if it be of God to meet together, then it is not of God to break up, and consequently not lawful, especially when the managing of that truth is called for.

*April 18, 1661, William Dunn and the church are joined together again, and so continue in their mutual love. The church is in a very good order again, blessed be God! and uphold their meetings. Through good report and evil report we end this year.

1663.

At a meeting to receive the Lord's supper, some of the

in April, an address containing a detailed account of the sufferings of 164 persons, then in prison, and of twenty-one others, who had been imprisoned but had died from their persecutions. Within six years 1960 person had been called to suffer for their faith.—Sewell, i. 345. Letters of Early Friends, &c. p. 62.]

[7] ["The King grants...a liberty to tender consciences, and that none be questioned for difference of opinion in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom."—Whitelocke, p. 702.]

[8] [On the occasion of Venner's insurrection; the persecution fell most severely on the baptists and quakers. Among the eminent baptists imprisoned, we find the names of Hanserd Knollys, Vavasor Powell, and John Bunyan.—Crosby, ii. 91; Neal, iii. 75.]

church were accused for eating of blood, contrary to the decree of the blessed apostles, elders, and brethren, in Acts the 15th chapter. Most of them promised to abstain from it for the time to come, as a thing unlawful to eat.

John Christmas, for not loving Ann his wife as he ought, and for speaking hateful and despising words against her, giving her occasion to depart from him by his unkindness, after sundry admonitions was withdrawn from.

John Christmas, afterwards sending for Ann his wife again and promising amendment, after her coming again to him desired to be a partaker with the church in holy duties, was joined in fellowship again.

Mary Flower, formerly called Mary Clay, for marrying with one not in the fellowship of the gospel, and so forsaking the assembling with the church, besides committing fornication before she was married, was, for these sins, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, withdrawn from.

Mary Drage, for sundry times dissembling with the church, and out of covetousness speaking things very untrue, at length it being plainly proved against her in her hearing, and she having little to say for herself, was withdrawn from.

John Richardson, for frequenting alehouses in the company of vain men, and for forging a warrant from a justice, and sundry evil carriages, was withdrawn from.

Thomas Bass, for telling of lies and swearing was withdrawn from.

Ellen Burges, for lying and slandering of her relations, and counting them and her mother witches,[9] which we have no ground to believe, was withdrawn from.

William Burgis, for acting in the sin of drunkenness and for committing fornication, was in the name of the Lord

[9] [Several executions for witchcraft had taken place a few years before this. Six women were condemned and hung at Maidstone in 1652. Sir

withdrawn from, and delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.[1]

Mary Christmas, wife of Thomas Christmas, for neglecting to assemble with the church, and for breaking that solemn covenant which she made with the Lord Jesus in holy baptism, and for her hypocrisy, lying, and deceit, in breaking that solemn promise which she made with our elder and others; in promising that she would not go after the Quakers any more, which promise is broken by her; and for rejecting the gospel means which were made [use] of by our elder and others for her recovery; and for not holding fast the true faith of Christ and a good conscience, and for lying upon the bed with another man, and for other impieties, we did, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, reject the said Mary Christmas, and deliver her unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the [day of the] Lord Jesus, and that she might learn not to blaspheme.[2]

1682.

John Stoakley this year died in the faith, who had been a teacher and labourer with us. Ann Stoakly, his wife, died soon after. Thomas Ridman is now our teacher, and we hold our meetings together, through the blessing of God, though they are broken up in many places of this nation.[3]

Matthew Hale left two unfortunate women for execution in 1664, on evidence utterly insufficient. Even the learned Selden could apologize for the wicked law under which they were judged.—*Burton's Diary*, i. 26. Penny Cyclop. Art. *Witchcraft*.]

[1] ["1712. William Burgis was received again into communion with our brethren at Warboys, and about two years after he died in faith and communion, and seemed to be a very humble and zealous Christian even to the last."]

[2] [The records of events in the long interval which elapses before the next entry are lost.]

[3] [Neal speaks of the persecution at this time as "this furious persecution."—*Hist. of Puritans*, iii. 233.]

1683.

This year presents us with great rumours of trouble abroad. The meetings at London broken up, and brethren haled to prison;[4] yet this noise does not trouble us with fear, for we are content to suffer for Christ, knowing it is the lot of the righteous not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake.

1684.

Notwithstanding the aforesaid trouble (which rather increases than abates) the brethren are zealous for the faith, and increase in number, there being some added to the church, and continue in the apostles' doctrine, in breaking of bread and prayers, with preaching from house to house, not being permitted to preach in open meeting houses. An elder and a deacon chosen by the will of the church; viz., Thomas Ridman for the elder, and Matthew Stoakley for a deacon. These [were] ordained by prayers, with laying on of hands, by John Denn and Edmund Mayle of Stanton, elders, according to the primitive practice of the apostles.

1685.

The Lord hath kept us still in the faith, who is worthy of praise. Yet great trouble abounds in many places, for the truth's sake. The brethren are received under laying on of hands of every member, which [is] done by Thomas Ridman, William Homes. Some added to the church this year; viz., Nancy Poulter, Elizabeth Yong, Sarah Homes. After which the Lord stirred up the hearts of other of his servants and handmaids, who also waited upon Him in the way of his

[4] [The excellent De Laune was thrown into prison this year, where he died a martyr to his faith. Bampfield and Ralphson were his companions in tribulation.—Crosby, ii. 366.]

own appointment, and after repentance with confession of their faith, they were baptized with water. They were by name, Thomas Parrot, William Yong, Ellen Burgis. February 10th. At the same time were two received under laying on of hands, with prayer to God that they might receive the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, to guide them in the truth, and bring good things to their remembrance, according to Acts 8th and Acts 19th.

Edward Grime's wife, for going from her husband from place to place, and speaking reproachful words against him, and was admonished for it several times, at length she was reproved openly before the church, and she set down her resolution not to live with him again, although he promised to amend and allow her needful things. At length she was withdrawn from, for these ensuing reasons:—

Firstly. For going from her husband.

Secondly. For resolving not to dwell with him again.

Edward Grimes reproved for being churlish to his wife and not allowing her needful things (promises amendment).

1686 and 1687.

It hath pleased God to take our brother and labourer in the faith, Thomas Ridman, to rest. Yet, blessed be God, he hath given light to others of his servants, that according to his promise, his gospel may run and be glorified, and that the ministration of it may not cease. Blessed be God, we have now some prospects of peace, even when we looked for trouble; so that God hath fulfilled his gracious promise, saying, you shall sit down under your own vine and under your inheritance, and none shall make you afraid. The Lord grant that we may improve it to his honour and our souls' good.

1688.

This year presents us with peace and prosperity; and

through God's mercy an increase of the faith. For several, after repentance and confession of faith, are baptized with water. Also the Lord hath stirred up the hearts of his servants to wait upon him in the way of his truth, according to Acts the 8th and Acts the 19th, viz.; after prayer to God, with laying on of hands for the promised Spirit, Acts 2nd. Which [was] done by Thomas Grantham, an elder of the church,[5] according to the primitive practice of the apostles. They were by name Richard Read and Susan Homes of Chatteris.

[It would appear probable that subsequent to this, the church at Warboys became incorporated with that at Fenystanton; but no record exists relative to it. All the remaining entries in the volume relate to the latter church.]

[5] [Mr. Grantham was baptized at Boston in 1653, when nineteen years of age. From that time he became eminent for his services in the church of Christ. He became an elder in 1656. He was called to endure afflictions with God's people during the time of persecution, but continued to his death, in 1692, to be faithful to his Lord. His chiefest work is a small folio entitled, "Christianismus Primitivus." See Taylor's Hist vol. i. passim.]

We, whose names are here underwritten, having heard the gospel preached, and having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and having confessed the same, were baptized with water.

The year of the Lord.	The Believer's Name.	Place of Abode.	The end they make.
1644	William Donn	of Warboys	
	John Richards		
	William Askew		
About this	John Kidson		
time	John Ward	of Fenton	
1648	Richard Donn	of Warboys	died in the faith.
	Henry Saville		
1652	William Rose	of Warboys	
	Henry Cranwell		
	Richard Hawkins		
1653	Thomas Christmas	of Warboys	
	Ellen Christmas	of Warboys	died in the faith.
	John Christmas		
	Elizabeth Donn	of Warboys	died in the faith.
	Alice Kidson		died in the faith.
	Elizabeth Askew		
	Mary Askew		
	Joane Donn		
	John Donn		
	Ellen Bedford		
	Mary Hawkins		
	John Richardson		
	Thomas Stokley		
	Roger Christmas		
	Rose Boone		
	Ann Ridman		
	George Parrit		
	Edward Parrit		
	John Barber	of London	
	Susanna Askew	of Barnet	died in the faith.
1654	Mary They	of Warboys	
	Ann Gibson		
	Mary Poulter		
	Elizabeth Christmas		
1655	Mark Bennit		
	Elizabeth Bennit		
	John Pettifor		
	Thomas Drage		
	Mary Drage		
1656	John Goodwin		departed this life, April 15, 1681.
	Ellen Goodwin		departed this life, Oct. 4, 1683.
1657	Mary Clay		
	Ann Tompson		

The year of the Lord.	The Believer's Name.	Place of Abode.	The end they make.
1658	Ellen Richards		
	Francis Richardson		
1662	Ann Paul	of Lincolnshire	
1664	Matthew Stokley		
	Joshua Bowes		
	Samuel Catlin	of Pidly	
	Mary Catlin		
1681	John Goodwin, sen.	of Warboys	died in the faith.
1683	Ellen Goodwin	of Warboys	died in the faith.
1676	Richard Goodwin	of Warboys	died in the faith.
1679	Ann Goodwin	of Warboys	died in the faith.
1683	Thomas Good[w]in	of Warboys	baptized.
1684	Thomas Christmas		
	Mary Christmas		
April 21	Mary Goodwin	of Warboys	baptized.
	Francis Richardson		
	Thomas Homes		
1682	Mary Goodwin, was born June 3rd.		
1682	Thomas Christmas		died in the faith.
1682	John Stokley		died in the faith.
1682	Ann Stokley		died in the faith.
	Nancy Poulter		
1685	Elizabeth Yong	of Warboys, Jan. 24th	baptized.
	Sara Homes		
	Thomas Parrot		
1685	William Yong	of Warboys, Feb. 10th	baptized.
	Ellen Burgis		
1685	Robert Stokly	March 11th	died in the faith.
1688	Susanna Homes	of Chatteris	baptized.
1688	Richard Read	of Chatteris	baptized.
1688	Sister Ibbot	of Warboys	baptized.
1688	Martha Read	of Chatteris	died in the faith.
(Aug. 4)			
1690	Richard Read's wife	of Chatteris	baptized.
1690	Jacob Kingston and his wife	of Warboys	baptized.
1691	Sister Clay	of Raudly	baptized.
1691	Ann Flower	of Raudly	do.
1691	[A name unintelligible]		baptized.
1691	Ellis Nickless		baptized.
1691	Bro. Clay	of Raudly	baptized.
1691	Ellis Chapman		baptized.
	John Richardson		
	Thomas Meadows		
1691-2, on	Robert Turkenton		
a Monday	William Basse		baptized.
evening in	Daniel Holmes		
November	Robert Crosby		
	John Richardson's wife		
	Thomas Meadow's wife		

1692.

In the year of our Lord 1692:

Milicent Poulter, wife of John Poulter, was baptized.
Elizabeth Holmes was baptized in [16]92.
Mary Goodwin was baptized in [16]92.

In the year of our Lord, 1697:

Matthew Wilton was baptized.

July 10th, 1698, Thomas Basse was baptized.
Sept. 1698, Mary Bedford was baptized.
April 26th, 1699, Ann Holmes, wife of Daniel Holmes, was baptized.
May 7th, 1699, Joseph Matthews was baptized.

In the year of our Lord God, 1700:

Oct. 8, 1700, John Varman was baptized.
Oct. 8, 1700, Eliz. Varman, wife of Jo. Varman, baptized.
Oct. 8, 1700, Mara Parrat was baptized.
November 8, 1700, J. Cousens was baptized.

May the 1, 1701, Ann Goodwin and Hannah Stockley, wife of Willm. Stockley, was baptized.

April, 1702, Willm. Gifford was baptized.

April 19, 1705, Mary Goodwin and Ellen Goodwin were baptized.

RECORDS AND LETTERS

OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH

AT

HEXHAM.

THE RECORDS, ETC.

In the name of the Lord Christ, I came to Hexham the 27th day of the 10th month, 1651, and so wonderfully hath God appeared in this dark corner, that upon the 21st day of the 5th month, 1652 (that is, the 7th month following), after serious consideration and some gospel preparation, a living temple began of these living stones:—

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HEXHAM.

Thomas Tillam, minister, and a messenger of one of the seven churches in London, did administer the holy ordinance of baptism, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, (under [the] 4th principle[1]), to

Month. Day.		No.	Month. Day.		No.
5th, 21st.	John Thirlwall	1		Susanna Thirlwall	1
	Richd. Orde	2		Mary Carre	2
	James Carre	3		Isabell Rowland	3
	Thomas Ogle	4		Dorothy Rowland	4
	Michael Adon	5		Margaret Ogle	5
	Robert Elwood	6			
	John Johnson	7			
	John Orde, jun.	8			
	Edward Croser	9			
	Edward Browell	10			
	Stephen Anderton	11			

These, solemnly giving up themselves to the Lord and one

[1] [Heb. vi 2, Laying on of hands. See before, pp. 61, 69.]

to another, to walk in communion together, with submission to all the ordinances of the gospel, I, Tho. Tillam, espoused to one husband; hoping that I shall present them a chaste virgin to Christ, with all that in sincerity of heart, have (through the mighty power of God), or shall be, joined to them.

At my desire and testimonial of my wife, as a member of the church of Christ in Cheshire, they gave her the right hand of fellowship.

Month. Day.		No.
5th, 21st.	Jane Tillam . .	6

The 25th day of the 5th month, 1652, the church joyfully celebrated the Lord's supper: John Thirlwall being desired (for proof) to supply the place of deacon. And the church began a stock, putting it into his hand.

Persons since baptized and added to the church,—

Month. Day.		No.	Month. Day.		No.
6th, 12th.	John Carnabye .	12	6th. 13th.	Kathren Anderton .	7
24th.	Thomas Stackhouse.	13	7th, 3rd.	Anne Smythe . .	8
	Edmund Hickhorngill	14	25th.	Cicilye Bell . .	9
7th. 3rd.	John Hudspeth .	15		Frances Stobberd .	10
18th.	Henry Farbricke .	16			
22nd.	Edward Bell . .	17			
	Edward Limbrough	18			
	Edward Stephenson	19			

The 23rd day [of the seventh month] the church celebrated a day of praise, and had a love-feast, and after it the holy ordinance of our Lord's supper; to which we admitted Richard Denton Trumpet, a member of one of the London churches.

1652.

Month. Day.		No.	Month. Day.		No.
8th, 16th.	John Ward[2] . .	20	8th, 3rd.	Katherine Carnabye	11

Brother Holmes minister of Bywell [Northumberland], a

[2] [This year, 1709, I, John Ward, have been an unworthy member 57

member of a church in London, was admitted to our communion, 8th month, 17th day.

Month. Day.		No.	Month. Day.		No.
8th, 23rd.	Thomas Rewcastle	21	9th, 16th.	Jane Rookesby	12
10th. 15th,	Hugh Hesloppe	22			
	Thomas Bilton	23			

The 20th day of the 10th month, the church, with prayer, fasting, and imposition of the hands of the minister, ordained brother Hickhorngill a minister, and their messenger into Scotland; and brother John Thirlwall, deacon.

1653.

First m.	Barbara Orde	13
19th day.	Elizabeth Carey	14
	Dorothy Banks	15

Charles Bond, a member with Dr. Chamberlain,[3] was admitted to communion, 2nd mo., 3rd day. And the same day, John Hudspeth, who before was suspended and again embraced, was now excommunicated.

2nd mo., 3rd day.

The same day the church solemnly commended their minister to the grace of God for the work in Cheshire, and sent their deacon with him, in much love.

By which means many were added to the church in Cheshire,[4] which, upon our return, caused great joy to the church of Hexham; whereunto, by the Lord's presence with

years, and a more unfit ordained elder in the ministry to the church, 54 years. MS. note.]

[3] [Dr. Peter Chamberlain, pastor of a church in London. He was engaged, in 1650, in a discussion on the subject of baptism with Mr. Bakewell, and also with Dr. Gouge.]

[4] [Probably to the ancient church at Hill Cliffe, near to Warrington. A Mr. Thos. Loe was pastor of the church in Warrington in 1689–91, which it is likely was a part of the church at Hill Cliffe. Douglas, Hist. of North. Bapt. Churches, pp. 21, 58.]

the labours of Tho. Tillam and S. Anderton, preaching in several parts of the country, many precious souls fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows.

Month. Day,		No.	Month. Day.		No.
3rd, 14th.	Henry Angus. .	24	3rd. 14th.	Mary Angus . .	16
	Mark Tayler . .	25		Elizabeth Tayler	17
	Anthony Hunter .	26		Jane Tayler . .	18
				Jane Warde . .	19
				Elizabeth Heslopp .	20
			28th.	Alice Swan . .	21

1653.

The 4th month, 4th day, a child of the devil came from Rome to ruin this church, and with great subtlety made a most glorious confession of Christ, pretending that he had been a Jew, and that his name was Joseph Ben Israel. After his declaration in the parish house, he was baptized. But the Holy One of Israel, our gracious Protector, brought the hellish impostor to light before he had any church communion. Ever blessed be His glorious name for this great deliverance.

Month. Day.		No.	Month. Day.		No.
4th, 18th.	John Bradshaw .	27	4th, 18.	Elizabeth Reidshaw .	22
	Robert Whitfield .	28			
	William Marshall .	29			
	Anthony Tayler .	30			

The 5th month, 3rd day, we prepared for the great work at Stokesley,[6] seven members engaging in the journey, where Mr. William Kaye,[7] the minister, and nineteen with him,

[5] [Mr. Douglas has given at some length an account of this singular imposture. The pretended Rabbi turned out to be the son of a Dr. A. Ramsay, a Scotch physician. This story is confirmatory of the wide spread impression existing during the Commonwealth, that papist spies were employed to add to the distractions of the times, by mixing with the various sects. Douglas, Hist. of N. Churches, pp. 24—29. Broadmead Records, pp. 42—46.]

[6] [In Yorkshire, at the base of the Hambleton Hills, and about twelve miles from Stockton-on-Tees. Douglas, p. 30.]

[7] [Crosby speaks of Mr. Kaye as a

were baptized by Tho. Tillam; a work of wonder, and calling for our high praises. In our journey, going and returning, eight persons were baptized, and are since added to the church of Hexham; viz.

Month. Day.		No.	Month. Day.		No.
5th, 5th.	Rowland Harrison .	31	5th, 5th.	Anne Joblin . .	23
	Cuthbert Warde .	32	11th.	Gilian Greenwell .	24
	Thomas March .	33			
	John Joblin . .	34			
11th.	Robert Tayler . .	35			
	Christopher Vicars .	36			

5th, 21st. Three ministers engaging at Muggleswicke,[8] their great design being to set up infant sprinkling, and the people in great expectation; the Lord so appeared on our side, that six persons, the same evening, desired the ordinance of baptism, and the next morning were baptized.

Month. Day.		No.	Month. Day.		No.
5th, 22nd.	Robert Sharpe .	37	5th, 22nd.	Elizabeth Sharpe .	25
	John March . .	38		Frances Vicars .	26
				Isabel March . .	27
6th. 6th.	John Draydon .	39	5th, 22nd.	Margaret March .	28
	William Burrell .	40	5th, 24th.	Alice Joblin . .	29
13th.	William Darnell .	41	6th, 13th.	Margaret Draydon .	30
				Jane March . .	31
			27th.	Mary Tillam . .	32

The 16th of the 6th month, Capt. Sympson and Capt. Mason,[9] with br. Blenkinsop, came to visit us, by order, from London and Newcastle churches. They hearing of our constitution and condition, sweetly and lovingly owned us as

gentleman of learning, who left the Established Church, and joined the Baptists. Hist. iv. 251.]

[8] [A village about twelve miles south-east of Hexham.]

[9] [In March 1651, we find the ministers of Newcastle complaining of a Lieut. Col. Mason, as an abettor of certain errors and sectaries in Newcastle. He is said to comman d the garrison in chief, in the absence of Col. Fairfax. Milton's State Papers, by Nicholls, p. 81.]

their brethren; which was far from the rugged and unbrotherly carriage of Mr. Goare,[1] &c.

The beginning of the 10th month, 1653, a charge came from the church of Newcastle, to the brethren of Derwent-side, consisting of twelve articles against Mr. Tillam, wherein manifestly appeared a subtle design to break or divide the church of Hexham. To which the person concerned returned (as was but needful) a speedy answer, which was approved; a Christian, sober, and faithful answer, and such as they did hope would amount to the satisfaction of those that follow after such things as make for peace amongst brethren. And as such it was subscribed by the whole church's full consent.

STEPHEN ANDERTON.
JOHN THIRLWALL, } *Deacons, &c.*
JOHN READSHAW, }

Notwithstanding, Mr. Goare, with much violence, laboured with the church at London, from whom Mr. Tillam was a messenger;[2] but God blasted all his endeavours, and wonderfully preserved the integrity of his despised servant, giving him still a large room in the hearts of his people of that society. Ever praised be His most glorious name.

1654.

The 6th of the 3rd month was baptized,

Month.	Day.		No.
6th,	3rd.	William Royle	42
8th,	29th.	John Shouler	43
11th,	6th.	Michael Warde	44
	23rd.	Cuthbert Newton	45

Month.	Day,		No
5th,	8th.	Elinor Hunter	33
6th,	24th.	Jane Yonger	34
7th,	2nd.	Anne Greenwell	35
8th,	11th.	Sarah Court	36
9th,	5th.	Margaret Atchison	37
Idem.		Jane Rawlinson	38
9th.	4th.	Ann Ellwood, under hand.	

[1] [Mr. Thomas Goare, Gower, or Gover, was a member of the church at Newcastle, and a colleague of Mr. Paul Hobson, at this time one of its ministers.]

[2] [The church of which Mr. Hanserd Knollys was pastor.]

4th month, 11th day, 1655.

Great storms and commotions, raised by Mr. Gower more than ever, so far prevailing with the church in Coleman Street, as to a disowning of Mr. Tillam, and all that are in the practice of laying on of hands.

Mr. Anderton first endeavoured a schism about imposition of hands; but failing therein, he opened his mouth in blaspheming against Mr. Tillam's doctrine, and plunged himself into other gross evils. For which he was by the elders, with the joint approbation of the church, delivered unto Satan, with Thomas Ogle.

The 4th of the 9th month, 1655, the church withdrew from Jo. Warde and John Readshaw. Rom i. 31; 2 Tim. iii. 3.

The 18th of the 9th month, 1655.

Being at Richmond, Ann Blackburne and Ann Lambe were added to the church.[3]

Brother Blenkinsopp and brother Angas having been at Dotland Park to invite us to a meeting with Derwent friends, we met them at Eadsbridge, the 26th of the 4th month, 1656; where we debated the cause of our division. And we did confess we had done better if we had laid Mr. Tillam aside, and not so suddenly had communion with him, till first we had used all means, and waited some time, to satisfy Coleman Street church (by what we know) in the insufficiency of their grounds of dealing with Mr. Tillam. And also for the evil that br. Heslopp acquainted us with, we should not have communion with him, till God should give him repentance; labouring by all means for peace with truth, but could not have it, unless we could see ourselves to have sinned in not hearkening unto the first testimony of Colman

[3] [The preceding entries are in Mr. Tillam's hand-writing, the following in Richard Orde's.

Street church, concerning their withdrawing from Mr. Tillam, though contrary to our consciences and [to] appearances, and would own our friends' withdrawing (as they call it) from us to be according to rule. And so we parted, leaving them (as appeared to us) in the same mind they were before they went to London. Though in private, elder Warde[4] did seem to confess their withdrawing not right, as to manner, before brother Blenkinsopp.

The 11th of the 5th month ('56) I went to Newcastle to the messengers. The 15th of the same, our Derwent friends and we met before them there. The 22nd [was] agreed upon for a conclusion betwixt us: and meeting at brother Joblin's,[5] and each party declaring the sense of their miscarriage to the other, we were by the messengers declared to be one body in the Lord.

The same day, the messengers having the hearing of the difference betwixt Mr. Anderton and the church, they judged Mr. Anderton had no warrantable ground to withdraw from the church, and that his withdrawing was but a fruit of passion, and [a breach of] the rules by which he pretended to withdraw; but the grounds for which the church dealt with him [were] warrantable and . . . . . Much whereof was confessedly by himself grant[ed].

The 28th of the 9th month ('58), the church withdrew

[4] [After Mr. Tillam's departure, the church at Hexham seems to have been divided into two parts; one under Mr. Orde, the other under Mr. Ward. Mr. Ward was chosen minister at the age of twenty-five, and presided over that part of the church which lived near the Derwent. The division seems to have been connected with Mr. Tillam's departure. Douglas, p. 71.]

[5] [Mr. John Joblins, or Joplin, lived at a farm called Foxholes, in the township of Heyleyfield. He was arrested with other members of the churches on the Derwent and at Newcastle, and tried for taking part in a pretended plot against the increasing tyranny and cruelty of the restored king, Charles II. The informer's evidence was so clearly a fabrication, that all were acquitted. Douglas, p. 81.]

from Tho. Rewcastle, for marrying with an unbeliever. 1 Cor. vii. 39, and ix. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

The 26th of the 10th month ('58), John Johnson did acknowledge his sin (from Rom. xiii. 13, 14), in going to one of the world's drinkings after a wedding, and so was received; and so did Jo. Orde for the same.

The 14th of the 2nd month, 1660, Stephen Anderton made a declaration to the church of his repentance; [and] was again received with great joy.

The 22nd of the same, Aylos Robson and Elizabeth Younger were baptized, and the 13th of the 3rd month were added to the church.

The 10th day of the 4th month, 1660, the church, after many tender admonitions, withdrew from Thomas Rewcastle, because he held, from Rom. xiv. 5, that he was not bound in duty from any command or practice, to give a seventh part of time to the worship and service of God, judging it a doctrine not according to godliness. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 5.

After this, the church here began sadly to decline their duties, break off their meetings, and forget their Rock. Whereupon miserable effects ensued to be their portion, so that most of them returned to folly. In this state they continued for many years. Though reproofs and admonitions were not wanting from several members of the church of Eadsbridge, on Derwent, but little of a [right] spirit yet remained in them to return unto the Lord, until the aforesaid church was pressed in spirit, in the year ('72), to send brother Ward and brother Blenkinsopp[6] to give them a meeting at Dotland Park.[7] When and where the Lord was pleased to speak so powerfully and convincingly, through them, that there began a little few of them, weakly and faintly, to return to the Lord, and sometimes [to] meet together. But notwith-

[6] [Elders of the church on the Derwent.]

[7] [Within four miles of Hexham.]

standing, they could not come up to walk in all the appointments of the Lord, in respect of the fewness of their number, and the remoteness of the dwellings of those few; which began to be a grief of heart to some of them, who went to advise with the church of Derwent what course to take herein, whom they found very ready to assist in what they might. In which interval of time, they were not a little helped and encouraged by brother Turner, pastor of the church of Newcastle, who, by a providential hand of the Highest was cast amongst them at Hexham, who did encourage them to make their addresses again to the church of Derwent; at which meeting it was agreed by the church there to send their two aforesaid elders, along with Mr. Richard Orde, to the remote members, to exhort them to return to their places and duties in the Lord's house. Which motion was so desirable unto them, that they did embrace it with readiness of mind. And then a day was appointed, with all our consents, to meet together at my house at Ardley. And in order to a right preparation for so great a work, we had days of humiliation set apart, when some of our number being admonished to be [there] did come, in particular brother Aydon, and made a declaration of his short-comings, and brokenness of heart for sin, that these few sheep here were much affected, and willing to embrace him.

The day before appointed being come, which was the 27th of the 10th month ('74), where also brother Blenkinsopp and brother Warde had laid out themselves to be; the method which was used was this:—every one of us did particularly declare our state, with a manifestation of our desires to wa k together as a church of Christ in all his appointments, giving ourselves up to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God, willing to watch over, and to be watched over, in the Lord. This done, the two messengers of the church, viz.,

brother Blenkinsopp and brother Warde, did declare their satisfaction, with much joy, and did solemnly pronounce us to be an orderly church of Christ.

The good Lord help us to walk worthy of our vocation wherein we are called, unto all well pleasing, and make us fruitful in every good word and work to the praise of his grace, &c.

Then we did address ourselves to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, in the close of the day; and our King was with us. Brother Ward did administer it.

The names of our members who are remaining, and [who] entered into a covenant to be the Lord's, are :—

No.
1. Richard Orde.
2. John Carnaby.
3. Humphrey Hughes.
4. Thomes Bilton, removed to Newcastle.
5. Robert Ellwood, mort.
6. Adam Stevenson, mort the 26th, 11th month ('82).
7. Michael Aydon, excommunicated. August the 29th ('75).
8. John Ellwood was baptized, and September the 5th following, was added to the church.

May the 21st ('76).

9. Mark Pigg, and } dead.
10. Aron Bunting } were baptized, and the 11th June following were added to the church.

No.
1. Susanna Orde.
2. Catheren Carnaby.
3. Margret Ogle.
4. Dorothy Bilton, removed to Newcastle.
5. Ann Ellwood, died the 14th of 5th month ('82).
   Elizabeth Sharpe, mort.
6. Ann Aydon, mort.
   March 19th ('75), Ales Robson who had been one with us formerly, and had been wandering in the world and after the quakers, did declare her sense of evil, gave the church satisfaction, and was received.
7. Ales Robson.
8. July the 22nd ('77), Deborah Thirlwall was baptized, and the 5th of August following was added to the church.

May the 12th ('78), the church having used all endeavours to recover those disorderly members, and finding it unsuccessful, at last did excommunicate John Johnson, for refusing to hear or come at the church. Matt. xviii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 5; [also] Ales Robson for the same, and joining

with the quakers. Matt. xviii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 5. And Frances Browell, for owning herself to be a papist, and saying she judged it, viz. popery, to be the way to salvation, &c.

August the 4th ('78), Michael Aydon, under suspension for excessive drinking, and was withdrawn from, according to 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15; 1 Tim. vi. 5; and September the 1st ('78), upon his repentance, was again joyfully received.

1680.

Samuel Sharp was baptized the 12th of the 7th month (1680).

1682.

Mic. Adon excommunicated, the 2nd of the 5th month, for excessive drinking, by the rule Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 10; 1 Cor. v. 5, 11.

Copy of Register of Marriage.

These are to declare to all whom it may concern, that Anthony Hunter of Holmsterley [Hamsterley], in the parish of Medomsley, and Ellinor Labbourne his wife, of the said parish, were married upon the 13th day of November, 1653, being the Lord's day, in the house of Mr. Thomas Tillyam, minister of Hexham, before us whose names are here underwritten, as witnesses of the said marriage:—

Rob. Selbie,	Edward Croser,
John Shouellar,	J. Alice Swann,
P. Hobson,	Jane Rookby,
Edward his S mark Steaverson,	Jane Tillam.

LETTERS, ETC.

1. *Edward Limburgh to the church at Hexham.*

To all the saints congregated in the order of the Gospel, and walking therein, at Hexham.

Dear and beloved Brethren,—I salute you in the Lord Jesus our righteousness, and in the spirit of love, whereby he loveth us, and hath washed away our sins by his blood, being made a curse for us, and an offering and a sweet smelling savour, acceptable unto our God; by whom we have access unto the Father, having our minds enlightened that were dark, but now are light in the Lord; and hath given us of his Spirit, whereby we cry, Father, Father, with full assurance of faith, and draw nigh unto the throne of grace, unto our Father by Jesus Christ, with confidence of receiving mercy from him; unto whom be glory and praise.

Beloved brethren, I thought it meet to let you know my condition, and the dealings of the Lord with me since by providence I was taken from you; wanting that communion and fellowship that formerly the Lord was pleased for to afford me with you, and that spiritual comfort that I received by your walking in the truth, according unto the declaration and manifestation of his will; being cast into these parts, where there are no visible saints, but in the midst of a rugged generation, being led by their priest, who bears rule over them, by their power, and the people delight for to have it so. But I hope their folly will be made manifest by the day. But, brethren, for my spiritual condition, it is full of barrenness and deadness, having been under great tempta-

tions and sufferings of Satan, and almost given up to hardness of heart. And many times [I] questioned the power of God; nay, whether there is any God at all; but truly the book of the creation hath presently preached that divine power. But, beloved, for that interest that we that believe have in Jesus, my eyes were veiled, my Beloved had withdrawn himself, as unto me; but yet my Lord upheld me, and gave me power for to seek his face, and that I could say, "Lord, why hidest thou thy face from thy servant?" And I speak to his praise, he is come skipping over the hills. But, dear brethren, my desire [is] that you would seek the Lord's face for me, that I might have more strength for to withstand these darts of Satan, and that my heart might be enlarged with praises, for receiving so great mercy in the time of need; and that the Lord would fill me more with his knowledge, and keep me closer unto himself, by his power working in me obedience unto all his commands. And now, brethren, my desire and prayer unto the Lord is, that he would fill your hearts with all spiritual wisdom and knowledge, that we might prove what the will of our Lord is, and therein might continue with prayer and thanksgivings, with all watchfulness over one another; building up one another in that holy faith, bearing one another's burdens, strengthening the weak, distributing to one another as we have received. And the Lord carry us so forth by his power, that we may not render evil for evil; but that we may be as a city set on a hill, and that others by our walking may glorify the Lord in the day of their visitation. And now the Lord of peace, that is our peace-maker, keep us blameless in all things, until his coming.

Your brother in our Lord Jesus and fellowship,

EDWARD LIMBROUGH.[8]

Jadburt,[9] the eighth month, the 30th day, 1652.

[8] [He was baptized and added to the church on the 27th Sept., 1652.]

[9] [Jedburgh, in Roxburghshire.]

2. *The church at Hexham to the church in Coleman Street, London.*

To the church of Christ walking in communion with the reverend and dearly beloved in the Lord, Mr. Hanserd Knollys, in London.[1]

Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved of God,—As it is just cause of holy rejoicing before the Lord when saints hear that Sion prospers, and that many are made partakers of the like precious faith with themselves, so we know and are persuaded in the Lord, that it will be the joy of your spirits, when by these our letters you shall understand, that the word of the Lord which sounded out from you is come unto us, not in word only but in power; wherein, through riches of grace, we stand, and rejoice under it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. For this cause, therefore, we are bound to thank God always on your behalf, as it is meet. For your debtors verily we are; for whatsoever appearances of God are risen upon us, since that your faithful messenger, and now our dearly beloved brother in the Lord, Mr. Thomas Tillam, whom we love in the truth, and very highly esteem for his work's sake, hath been eminently instrumental in carrying on the Lord's work amongst us. But that your hearts may the more affectionately be drawn out to admire the riches of the Father's love to us-ward, we desire to show of ourselves what manner of entrance your gospel had in unto us, and the blessed success

[1] [This church was formed by Mr. Hanserd Knollys in 1645, and first met in Great St. Helen's. From subsequent letters it appears to have met in Coleman Street at this time; till now it has been supposed they met somewhere in Finsbury Fields. Mr. Knollys possessed a house there, and erected buildings for the use of his school. It may be that the church occasionally assembled there too. At the time of his death in 1691, after fifty years' service, the church met at Broken Wharf, Thames Street. Life, pp. 7, 36; Wilson's Diss., ch. ii. 568.]

wherewith it hath been accompanied, from the first day even until now. This is the twelfth month since Providence first directed Mr. Thomas Tillam into these parts, when, by the encouragement of the commissioners authorised by the parliament for propagating the gospel in the four northern counties,[2] and by the importunity (especially) of some of them, the Lord was pleased to open a door effectual for his preaching the lecture established here at Hexham, by the honourable Society of Mercers, London.[3] And now was the time, determined by the Father, come, for the revealing of his will to us poor creatures; and the dawnings of the glory of the Lord arose upon us, even upon us did light break forth, who were a people sitting under gross darkness, even under the shadow of death;[4] the Lord being pleased to be found of those that scarcely asked after him; in the place where it was there were not a people, are we (through grace whereby we stand) become the people of God. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward, that he who hath begun the good work in us will perfect it to the day of Christ, notwithstanding all the oppositions of men. For we would not have you ignorant, beloved of God, what great opposition hath befallen us, both on the right hand and on the left, since we first made a visible profession of the despised truths of the Lord Jesus. Not to mention the many reproaches, the many lying slanderous reports, cast upon us, and upon our practice,

[2] [The act for propagating and preaching the gospel and for the maintenance of able ministers and schoolmasters, for the four northern counties, was passed on the 26th February, 1649-50, at the same time with a similar one for Wales. Whitelock's Memorials, p. 427.]

[3] [A lectureship was established in the Abbey church, in 1628, by the Mercers' Company, pursuant to the will of Mr. Richard Fishbourne, dated March 30, 1625. Douglas, p. 7.]

[4] [The Mayor of Sunderland in a petition to parliament wrote:—"We are a people who have been destitute of a preaching minister; yea, ever since any of us, that now are breathing, were born, to our souls' grief and dreadful hazard of destruction. Neither is it our case alone, but also ten or twelve parishes all adjoining are, in like manner, void of the means of salvation." Douglas, p. 10.]

by formal professors, atheists, and papists, whereof there are multitudes swarming in these dark corners of the land: not to mention them, our sorest and sharpest [conflicts] have been with the ministry of these parts, and with those amongst them who are accounted most honourable for learning, and eminent for [godliness. They] unanimously set themselves against us. One of them . . . in a public dispute which we had with the ministry concerning believers' baptism, did, in the face of the ministry, call our practice detestable, abominable, and blasphemous. Another of them, publicly, in this parish meeting-house, did preach against it, and asserted sprinkling as more consonant to the mind of Christ, which assertion was then opposed by us, and our practice, with much clearness, justified to the great satisfaction of the unprejudiced auditors. Thus we are perplexed on every side, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; on fire round about, but not consumed; through the goodness of Him that dwelt in the bush. Nay, the Lord so wonderfully bears up our spirits, that in all this opposition we are so far from shrinking, or giving back, that we are the more encouraged, through Him that strengtheneth us, to go on in our most holy faith, and the Lord is pleased to add daily unto us such as we hope shall be saved.

And now, what are the pantings of our spirits, and what are the longings of our souls? Are not ye? and communion with you? that since it hath pleased the Father to count us worthy, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his name, and hath made us partakers of you in one Lord, one faith, one baptism; that you would own us in the Lord, and reach out unto us the right hand of fellowship, that token of love which passes in all the churches of the saints, that our communion may be with you, whose fellowship, we are confident, is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, by his Spirit, in the ordinances and order of the gospel; that you

may be helpers [of] our joy, and that we may be comforted of you, with the like comforts wherewith you yourselves have been comforted of God. For in all these trials we are but followers of you and of all saints, who have endured the same sufferings which we also suffer; so that our hope of you is, that you who are strong and grown in the faith, will support us that are weak; since it is a righteous thing that they who have been partakers of [the] same suffering, should be partakers also in the consolation. Finally, beloved in the Lord, we pray you help together by prayer for us, that we may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of our vocation wherewith we are called, strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inner man, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, by being blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse people; holding forth the life of the word in a shining conversation, becoming the gospel of Christ. Now, the God of peace give you peace, by all means, that ye may stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, abounding always in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Your brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

Stephen Anderton,	Thomas Stackhouse,
John Thirlwell,	John Carnaby,
Thomas Ogle,	James Carr.
Richard Orde,	

With the joint desire of the brethren, meeting in order of the gospel, assembled in Hexham.

The 4th day of the 10th month, 1652.

To Hanserd Knollys.

3. *Edward Hickhorngill to the church at Hexham.*

To my best beloved brethren, gathered together in the name of the Lord at Hexham, these.

Dearest Brethren,—I know you long to hear from me, and of the dealings of our God with me. And truly, I do equally desire to acquaint you with them, as it is my duty and great privilege. I had a very safe and comfortable journey hither (blessed be God), and spoke with the Major-General[6] upon the 30th day of the 10th month, being the 5th day of the week, in the morning, he being then about to go to dinner. After he had known my business with him, by reading Mr. Howard's[7] letter, he sent for me to dine with him; and, after dinner, he told me he would give me an answer, which was this: that as for himself he was about to quit his interest in Scotland, but he had given orders to Col. Lilburne[8] to take cognizance of me. Which accordingly he did, and after some discourse with me, he ordered that his housekeeper should forthwith provide me a chamber in the castle, and as near his own chamber as he could conveniently. Whereupon I came to the castle, where I now reside with him; and, in short, the Lord hath much inclined his heart towards me. Providence cast me into the company of Captain Gardiner, once a chaplain in the army, not unknown to some of you, who, before my address to Col. Lilburne, in-

[5] [See before, p. 291. Mr. Hickhorngill was appointed a messenger of the church to Scotland on the 20th December, 1652.]

[6] [Monk, who shortly after left Scotland, and took a command in the fleet in the Dutch war.]

[7] [A Col. Charles Howard was associated with Col. Lilburne, as a substitute for Lambert, in the execution of his office as one of the military major-generals appointed by Cromwell in 1655. Carlyle's Cromwell, ii. 376.]

[8] [In Guizot's Memoirs of Monk, Lilburn is spoken of as a "fanatic anabaptist." In 1647, he was governor of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the year following sat as one of the king's judges, and signed the warrant of execution. On the restoration he was tried as a regicide, but offered no defence. He was exiled to the isle of St. Nicholas, off Plymouth, where he died in 1665.]

formed me out of his own experience of the inconveniences of the condition of a chaplain, and that such could not speak out the mind of God so freely. And that it was a chief stumbling-block to many that are without, keeping them off from the way of God; but especially to those brethren that are assembled in this country, according to the order of the gospel; bringing likewise that notable scripture to this purpose in Acts xx. 35. All which wrought so powerfully upon my soul, that when I came to make known my request to Col. Lilburne, I told him that I could not accept of a chaplain's place, however God dealt with me; but should rather desire some employment from him, whereby I might live without making the gospel burdensome. His answer was, that he commended my tenderness, and would act for me to the utmost of his power; and hereupon caused his servants to make provision for me in the castle, as above. There is no command nor convenient place as yet fallen, and therefore I do yet continue with the colonel. And I perceive he hath no desire to part with me yet. Whether I stay with him or no, I intend to press him to settle me in the next convenient place that falls into his power in Scotland, being confident of his readiness to bestead me, as having already great experience of it; what great cause have you and I to praise our gracious God in my behalf. It is the Lord's doing; and therefore fit it is that we should render him the calves of our lips, and the choicest praises of our hearts. I earnestly beg your fervent prayers for me, that God would be my counsellor and companion, and prosper me to every good work. And I think I need not press you to send me your Christian advice and direction, having had such experience of your unwearied affection and care of me.

Your very loving brother, engaged to you in the nearest union,

EDWARD HICKHORNGILL.

Dalkeith, this 8th day of the 11th month, '52.

4. *The church in Coleman Street to the church at Hexham.*

To the church of God assembled in Hexham, walking in the order of the gospel.

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, we greatly rejoiced in the Lord on your behalf, when we read your gracious epistle unto us; which also occasioned many thanksgivings unto God, for the grace bestowed upon you, and for the faith and love wrought in you, by the preaching of the gospel. For this cause, therefore, we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of God, that the word of God which hath sounded out from us, by that messenger of the Lord, our dearly beloved brother, Mr. Thomas Tillam, sent unto you, hath come to you, not in word only but in power, and in the Holy Spirit; whereby you are effectually called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, through faith in him, and also are planted together by baptism in the likeness of his death; and being gathered into one congregation, to worship God in spirit and truth, are built up an habitation of God by the Spirit, and so are constituted by the Lord to be a visible church of Christ.

Now, therefore, beloved brethren, we, the elders and brethren, with the whole church, being assembled with one accord, do own you in the Lord, to be a visible constituted church of God; who are made partakers with us in one Lord, one faith, one baptism. And, hereupon, we do give unto you the right hand of fellowship, in token of our communion with you in the faith and order of the gospel. And we rejoice with you, brethren, that God hath enabled you to endure so great a fight of affliction, with so powerful and subtle enemies; who not only gainsaid and opposed the truth, but also loaded you with reproaches and revilings, for the truth's sake, which

you have patiently borne, with long-suffering and joyfulness. Whilst in all these trials, you have been followers of us, and of all the churches of Christ, who have endured the same sufferings which you also do suffer. And we pray for you that God, who hath comforted us, in all our tribulations and temptations which we suffered for his name's sake, will comfort you also with the like consolations in Jesus Christ; and that you having washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb, may come out of your great tribulation with white garments and palms of victory; that you may shine in a gospel conversation, and be to the praise of the glory of God, who hath vouchsafed the unsearchable riches of his grace unto you, and made you his people who were not his people.

Finally, dear brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up in him. And we do earnestly desire your prayers for us, that we may walk worthy of that holy vocation whereunto we are called, having our conversation in heaven, and [that] being blameless and harmless, as the sons of God, in the midst of an evil generation of the sons of men, we may shine, and so adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Now peace be to you, brethren, with faith and love, through our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, the King of saints, the Prince of peace, the Lord of glory, the Son of God, and the great Shepherd of the flock; in whom we are—

Your brethren and companions in tribulation and in consolation,

HANSERD KNOLLYS,[9] JOHN PERRY,[1]

[9] [Mr. Hanserd Knollys was born in 1598, and died at the good old age of ninety-three. He was buried in Bunhill fields. He became a baptist about the year 1636, surrendering his preferment in the establishment. As a confessor of Christ he was eminent, and endured several imprisonments, and years of exile, for the truth. Wilson, ii. 563.]

[1] [Mr. John Perry's name is appended to a Letter of the London churches to the churches in Wales, dated 24th July, 1653. Rippon's Register, App. p. 19.]

THOMAS BUTTIVANT, WILLIAM SPIER,
HENRY PARRPOINTE, WILLIAM JENNINGS,
THEODORE JENNINGS, BENEDICT HUNT,
JOHN . . . . .

London. Signed with the unanimous consent of the church assembled in one, this 9th day of the eleventh month, 1652-3.

WILLIAM HOWARD,
JOHN AMIGER.

5. *Edward Hickhorngill to the church at Hexham.*

To my best beloved brethren in the Lord, assembled at Hexham, these.

Dear Brethren,—I have long expected an answer from you to mine, sent to you about a month ago. Sometimes I fear the miscarriage of my letter to you, and sometimes I attribute this long intermission on your part to the better employments that possibly might delay your more speedy despatch of a letter to me. Sometimes a consideration of mine own unworthiness makes your apology. Sure I am that I had never more need of your Christan and brotherly advice and counsel than at this present. I acquainted you in my last letter of my scruple, touching the condition of a chaplain; and chiefly upon this ground, lest I should offend some brethren in these parts if I should close with it. And the apostle in the like case, Acts xx. 35, lays an injunction upon the elders of Ephesus, that they should labour with their hands, according to his example. This was that principal motive that prevailed with me to request the Colonel Lilburne for some other employment than that of a chaplain, which he told me he would endeavour to the utmost of his power. But, since that time, he hath mustered me as chaplain in his own regiment of horse, without giving me the least notice of it; and intended (as I suppose, and that upon good grounds)

to dispose of the profit of the place [to] me, as from himself, if I will accept it, and so to run on till Providence open a door for some other employment for me. The Lord hath exceedingly drawn out his heart towards me; he hath given me very free and noble entertainment since I came hither, and I perceive he hath no thoughts of parting with me whilst he continues in this employment—nor afterwards, if I will accept of being chaplain to his regiment—except I be disposed of in some other command, that will hinder my constant abode with him. I long to hear from you as to this particular, that I might have your serious thoughts and direction, whether I should disclaim and reject that condition, which Providence, without any seeking, hath so strangely cast upon me, and so stay till the Lord make my way for some other course of living, by a second dispensation, and thereby humour the brethren here; or that I should resolve upon the contrary, by accepting a chaplain's place when the colonel shall proffer it to me, which yet he hath not done, taking it for granted that I will refuse it; and yet of certain he hath mustered me. Some brethren here have a latitude to the above named particular, and others are more straitened. I find it exceeding difficult to know when it may be lawful to use our liberty, though it give offence to some weak Christians, and when it is our duty to forbear. Sometimes I think a saint may use his liberty, though he offend the weak, as in this case. It is lawful for the army to accept of their pay, though forty weak Christians should be offended at it; and if so, then it is equally lawful to live upon the gospel, though divers weak saints scruple it, and be offended. If it can be proved that a man may as lawfully, and with as clear warrants from scripture, receive money for preaching as for fighting, which perhaps is evident from 1 Cor. ix. 7—*Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges?*—certainly as it is an abominable wickedness to preach purely for money, as

those in Micah iii. 11, so it is likewise a parallel wickedness to fight purely for money. Yet a sincere soul can make a good use of that which others abuse; and convert that to good nourishment which [some] persons abuse, and is poison to others. Let me again beg of you, that I might be happy in the receipt of a few lines from you touching these things; as, likewise, whether you think it convenient that I should join myself to the church here at Leith, which truly I am unwilling to do at present for some special reasons, though I have been often solicited thereunto by the chief of them,[2] as Major Holmes,[3] Major Harrison,[4] &c. Well, I must abruptly conclude, and subscribe myself,

Your truly affectionate brother,

EDWARD HICKHORNGILL.

Dalkeith, Feb. 5th, 52-3.

6. *The church at Hexham to the church in Coleman Street, London.*

To the church of Christ walking in the order of the gospel, with our reverend brethren, Mr. Hanserd Knollys and Mr. John Perry.

Holy and precious Brethren,—We salute you dearly in the Lord, praying that grace and peace, by the eternal Spirit, from our Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, may be multiplied upon you.

[2] [See Fenstanton Records, p. 165.]

[3] [The name of Abraham Holmes is appended to a reprint at Leith of the Confession of 1646, dated the 10th of March, 1653.]

[4] [Harrison was shortly after dismissed the army by Cromwell, with many other baptists who disapproved of his assumption of supreme power. Harrison was one of the judges of Charles II. On the restoration he was tried as a regicide, and being convicted was hung. "For the integrity of his life, and the Christian heroism with which he endured a cruel and ignominious death, he may deservedly be classed, if he may not challenge priority, with a More, a Russell, a Sydney." Burton's Diary by Rutt, iv. 432, note.]

When we call to mind that sweet interest which you have (to the unspeakable refreshing of our spirits) given us in the bowels of tender love, we abound in thanksgivings to our God always, upon every remembrance of it; yea, we joy exceedingly, accounting it our especial mercy and choice privilege, that we have your bosoms free and open unto us, whereinto we can transmit all our affairs, and those designs which we have in our hearts for the promoting the honour of our King in the midst of us.

Holy and beloved, it many times hath been, but now more especially is, the desire of our souls, that as to gospel order we might be a people standing perfect and complete in all the will of God. For since the day wherein it pleased the Father, to the praise of the exceeding riches of his grace, to call us out of the way of error and the world into the way of truth as it is in Jesus, it hath sometimes sat sadly upon our spirits, to see some things wanting in us, which, how to set in order, as from among ourselves, we found not. Yet our God, who hath given us abundant consolation through you, doth seem to open unto us a door of hope, that our greatest [desire], which is of a pastor to take the care and oversight of us in the Lord, may through your condescendings be supplied unto us. We desire, therefore, to give you to understand, that as our eyes and our hearts have formerly been, so now at present they are, more intently set upon that eminent servant of the Lord, and your messenger, Mr. Thomas Tillam, to call him to take the charge of us, and as a pastor to be over us in the Lord. For, although as a general officer he hath laboured in the gospel among us from the first day until now, and hath faithfully supplied to our great comfort and spiritual advantage, whatsoever service hath been lacking to us in the things of Christ; yet our hearts' desires after him are, for a nearer and closer interest in him, if, by the will of God, this grace may be ministered unto us by

you. That he being given from you into our embraces, his way may be plain, to be taken into a more particular relation to us in the body than hitherto he hath been. Many persuasive inducements are upon our spirits, drawing us forth to make this our solemn address to you. As those several gracious testimonies, which yourselves have deservedly given of this our truly precious brother, commending him to the saints, wheresoever he should come, for the building them up in the knowledge of the gospel; which thing also you did, in your gracious epistle to us, your poor brethren, in particular. Add here, unto your clear experiences (the best of testimonies), [those] which we have had of him, and the full proof which we have had of his ministry, whereby he hath been thoroughly manifest amongst us, approving himself a man of God, whose purpose and manner of life we have fully known.

Besides these, we shall only present you with a short view of our present dangers which threaten us, and then leave you either to assent to, or dissent from, these our desires, as God shall move upon your spirits. Beloved in the Lord, we are a people brought forth in these parts of the land wherein iniquity doth most abound, and many deceivers are risen up; yea, even swarm in these northern parts, especially of those called Quakers, whose pernicious ways many do follow; a generation whose main design is to shatter the churches of the saints, by stealing away the tender lambs out of the folds of the Lord Jesus; crying down the scriptures, those sacred oracles of truth, as a dead letter, and crying up the lights within, as they call it; making great shows of self-denial in a voluntary humility, and neglecting of the body, which are very taking with weak ones; all for a Christ within, nothing for a Christ without. With such smooth words and fair spiritual speeches, the hearts of simple ones are deceived from the simplicity of the

gospel.[5] Never more need of watchmen than at this day. All Sion's towers should be planted with sentinels to warn the inhabitants thereof of their enemy's approaches; to excite them to a holy watchfulness, and an earnest looking for the return of the Captain of our salvation. And blessed are they, whom in his return he shall find so doing.

Finally, brethren, we beseech you to pray for us, as we do for you, that we may be preserved steadfast and unmoveable in these tottering times; that we may be strengthened with might by the Spirit of our God in the inner man; that he would, out of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, supply all our wants. Into whose embraces we commend you, and remain,

Your brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

Rowland Harrison,	Edward Browell,
John Readshaw,	John Johnson,
William Marshall,	Anthony Taylor,
Mark Taylor,	Anthony Hunter,
Robert Taylor,	Stephen Anderton,
John March,	Tho. Ogle,
Christopher Vickers,	Richard Orde,
John Ward,	Robert Sharpe.
Hen. Angas,	

We salute our truly gracious and dearly beloved sister in the Lord, Mrs. Alice Swanne, who (as we hear to our great comfort) is taken into sweet communion with you. To whom we desire to give thanks, for her large contribution, which after her departure from us was ministered to the necessi-

[5] ["I passed through Northumberland to Darren-water, where there were great meetings: . . . many hundreds were turned unto Christ." "Then passed we on to Hexham, where we had a great meeting at top of an hill. And the everlasting day, and renowned truth of the ever-living God was sounded over those dark countries, and his Son exalted over all. G. Fox's Journal, i. 217, 218.]

ties of the saints here, as a token of her love. The bowels of the poor saints here were sweetly refreshed by it, and we have this confidence, that it will be found fruit abounding to her account and praise in the day of the Lord Jesus. We have also been refreshed through her lines, to which (if God will) we intend to return her a speedy answer.

By the appointment of the church of Christ at Hexham, 1st day, 1st month, 1653.

7. *Edward Hickhorngill to the church at Hexham.*

To my well-beloved brethren in the Lord, assembled at Hexham; these.

Dear Brethren,—Your kind and Christian letter came about a week ago, not only acceptably, but seasonably to my hands. For within two or three days after the receipt of it, I had a meeting with the church at Leith (according to their desires and mine), to debate those things wherein we dissent; that if it were the will of God, we might accord in brotherly union and fellowship, and sit down together; that so we might be mutual helps to one another. One of the chief things wherein we dissented was that case of receiving moneys for preaching, concerning which we have had a serious and mild conference. And in the issue we came to this result, that it was not unlawful, nor disorderly, to receive what was freely given for preaching the gospel, according to your judgments in the same case specified in your letter to me. After which conclusion, we came to discourse of some other particulars, wherein our opinions were different; as, whether it was lawful to pray with unbaptized believers, or to hear a gifted and well-qualified Christian preach the gospel, if he be not under the same order of the gospel with us. Some of the church held the negative; but because it was not the judgment of all the

brethren, we resolved to leave each one to his liberty; with this caveat, that he should be very wary and tender in giving offence to the weak. In these, as in all other points wherein formerly our differences kept us at a distance, our gracious God brought us to a happy and much desired agreement; so that now we are embodied in much affection and union, to my exceeding great comfort. Col. Lilburne hath given me liberty to be with the church, whenever they shall please to call me amongst them. I am to exercise with them the next first day. It would be comfortable to me to hear of a good correspondence and union twixt the saints at Newcastle and yourselves, that fellow members of the same body might not disown each other, having one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Captain Turner hath, since his last coming hither, changed his judgment about the above-named particular, of living upon the gospel when maintenance is freely given. I hope bro. Gore [Gower] will shortly be like-minded; so that I hope you and our brethren at Newcastle, will own each other in all Christian fellowship and communion. I am desired by Col. Lilburne to propose to you, that bro. Tillam, bro. Anderton, Bro. Stackhouse, or any other fitly qualified brother amongst you, will bestow his talents in the condition of a chaplain to a regiment, about which place there are divers honest Scotch people that long to be gathered into the same gospel order with us, but they want a faithful pastor. Fail not, I pray you, to give me an answer herein, with all convenient speed. Let me not, I beseech you, want your prayers to the Lord in my behalf; neither your Christian advice, so far as it may be needful to your brother that dearly loves you.

EDWARD HICKHORNGILL.

Dalkeith, March 15th, 52–3.

8. *The church at Coleman Street, London, to the church at Hexham.*

From the church of Christ assembling in Coleman Street, London.

To our beloved brethren at Hexham, who walk together in the faith and order of the gospel of Christ, grace, mercy, and peace be ever renewed and multiplied on you, from God our Father, through our Lord Jesus, that is full of grace and truth, and from whose fulness all his receive grace upon grace.

We pray for you, that your hearts may be stablished therewith, that you may be abounding in every grace, that you may have sufficiency in all things, whereby you may be furnished and fitted for every good work; being strengthened in the inward man by the Spirit of God, that you may walk worthy of that vocation whereunto you are called, and of that near relation with himself unto which he hath brought you through faith in his Son Jesus; who is become our head, from whom all his body, being knit together by joints and bands, have spiritual nourishment ministered unto them, and do increase with the increasings of God, that they might grow up to be a temple in the Lord, and an habitation for God, that it might be the place of his rest for ever.

Beloved brethren, these may also give you to understand that we received your letter, wherein you express the growth of your faith, and also your love towards us. The which gives us occasion to give God thanks, and to rejoice in hearing of your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day till now, being persuaded that through grace you shall continue in the faith grounded and settled, and not be moved from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard and received in truth, as it is in Jesus, till he come who will confirm all his unto the end, when he shall present all his faultless before the presence of his Father; for he is able to keep them from falling, and to preserve them unto salvation.

We have also taken into consideration your desires that you wrote about in reference to our brother Tillam, and we are very free and willing to answer you therein as the Lord shall direct us and assist us. We would therefore inform you, that when our brother went out from us, we judged, from that little knowledge we had of him whilst he was with us, that the Lord had enriched him with some spiritual gifts, the which might be useful and successful through the blessing of God in other places abroad. And thereupon we gave him our letter of commendation, and sent him forth to preach the gospel, and to baptize them that did believe the same; and accordingly, as the Lord should assist and direct him, to be instrumental to set them in an orderly way, wherein they might worship God in spirit and truth, and might be edified and built up in their faith and the knowledge of Jesus Christ (as his truths). But as for our approbation that he might be given up to you as your pastor, or elder, if the Lord shall call him thereunto, we conceive it more concerns you than us, you having more knowledge and understanding of his qualifications than we, whether they are answerable to these scriptures: 1 Tim. iii. 2—7; or Titus 6—9. And if so, if there be then a freeness and fitness in him for the work, it is then your privilege, if you do so approve of him, that you may with a mutual consent make choice of him amongst yourselves. And if the Lord shall make the way clear both to you and him, we hope we shall be one with you, and rejoice therein. And if you find that we might be any way further serviceable to you herein, than we have at present expressed, we desire that we may hear thereof from you and him; especially when our brother Tillam hath given us an answer to our letter, that we have now sent to him, concerning our judgment of our brethren's charge of Newcastle against him,[6] and his answers thereto.

[6] [Later in the year, in December, these charges were sent to the brethren at Derwent side, in twelve articles. See before p. 294.]

We desire, if it were the will of the Lord, that the occasions of your differences might be removed, and all your breaches healed. And if brethren seem to be contentious, we have not, or at least we should not have, any such custom, neither any of the churches of God. We desire that the Lord may give us and you all, of that wisdom which is from above, that is pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. For the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace of them that make peace, and follow after peace; for the kingdom of our God consisteth in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. And he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. We desire the Lord to help you to that end, and in that way wherein you may follow after those things which make for peace, and things wherewith you may edify one another. And as concerning brotherly love, we hope we need not write much unto you, for you are all taught of God to love one another.[1] But we shall desire our God, that he would make you all to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men; to the end your hearts may be established, and be kept unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. Till then let brotherly love continue. Farewell in the Lord.

Your brethren in truth,

John Perry,	John Watson,
William Jennings,	John Armiger,
W. Howard,	Theodore Jennings,
Richard Signet,	Will. Spier.

[24th March, 1653.]

9. *Mr. Thomas Tillam to the church at Hexham.*

Thomas Tillam, the unworthiest of the ministers of our Lord Jesus, to the beloved saints of Christ, walking in the faith and fellowship of the gospel at Hexham.

Grace, mercy, and peace be ever multiplied upon you, from that full Fountain who hath washed your redeemed souls in his most precious blood. The remembrance of you, holy and beloved, is very sweet unto me, because you are written in my heart, and are an epistle fair and legible, seen and read of all men; which hath exposed you to such reproaches, temptations, and sufferings of several sorts, that as they now make you very comely in Christ's eye (however the world look upon you as black, swarthy, and sun-burnt), so after the running of a few more sands you shall certainly find, that this was none other but the king's highway to those eternal mansions which your espoused Lord is now preparing for you.

O my beloved brethren! my sons, my daughters in Christ, my own children in the faith, I cannot tell you how well I love you. Does not every artist love, prize, and praise his own workmanship? It is the joy of my soul, that ye, even ye, are my workmanship in the Lord. For I have begotten you through the gospel; either from profaneness unto holiness, or at least from error unto order. And now the God of order stablish you, that you may be found complete in all the will of God; delivered from that confused noise of many waters, in the obscure parts of your present abode, which obstructs the sweet, silver, single stream, the still and soft voice of the gospel, that makes glad the city of God, and will assuredly lead and conduct your precious souls through the gate into the city. And now, my beloved, you have a season, through the hand of providence detaining me from you, to recollect your thoughts, and raise your meditations

upon the breathings of the spirit through this poor earthen vessel. While I was with you, you may not forget my last words, from 1 John iv. 17. The Lamb of God, who hath made you spotless like himself, is now in heaven, busily employed in preparing, praying, obeying. And as he is, so are we (if right) in this world. Oh! prepare, pray, obey, my dear ones, in the spirit of truth and love. You will not surely be offended that the hand of my Father hath drawn me to this great city, to obey him in those precious truths which he pleased to make known unto me, and which he hath filled brimful of mercies in the practice of. For after I had enjoyed heavenly communion with my precious brethren in Coleman Street, and had acquainted them with my purpose to obey Christ, in that fourth principle,[8] and had received this gracious letter to the saints in Cheshire from them,[9] I departed in much love, to the melting of my hard heart. And having found many congregations in the practise of the ordinances I wanted, I was by a blessed hand guided to my most heavenly brother, Doctor Chamberlen, one of the most humble, mortified souls (for a man of parts) that ever yet I met with. In whose sweet society I enjoyed the blessing of my God, by the laying on of their hands.[1] And after a lovefeast, having washed one another's feet, we did joyfully break bread, concluding with a hymn. In all which the singular majesty of Christ shined forth, to the mighty conviction of some choice spectators. And now, what am I, to whom God should make known his truths, professed even of late by so many of his eminent servants, and

[8] [The laying on of hands, Heb. vi. 1.]

[9] [Mr. Tillam and Mr. Anderton were commended to the work in Cheshire, by this church, on the 3rd April, 1653. See before, p. 291.]

[1] [D'Anvers says the practice of laying on of hands was first introduced in 1646, by Mr. Cornwell, then a minister of a baptized congregation in Kent. It was first practised in London by the church meeting in the Spittle in Bishopsgate Street, after sermons by Mr. Cornwell on the subject, in the above year. Treatise, p. 58.]

among the rest Mr. Tombs.[2] Brethren, be earnest with God, that I may walk worthy of his mercies bestowed upon me, and that I may have a prosperous and speedy return to you. For God is my witness, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Oh! how greatly have you endeared [yourselves to] me, by your faithful affection and tender care of my dear yoke-fellow, which is conveyed through mine eye to my heart, by the faithful pen of my beloved brother Rich. Orde, unto whom I return my unfeigned thanks. And I thank and heartily salute you all. Oh! that you could embrace it as the mind of Christ, to greet one another with a holy kiss. Oh! how amiable it is in the churches where it is practised. Salute my beloved yoke-fellow. The churches of Christ do bless you and heartily salute you.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all,
Amen.

10. *A letter of commendation.*

To all the saints of Christ, walking in the order of the gospel, grace and peace from Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace, and King of saints.

Beloved Brethren,—We salute you in our Lord Jesus, rejoicing to commend unto you this our very dear and precious brother, Mr. Thomas Stackhouse, faithful and approved in the Lord, who hath much honoured the gospel of our dear Redeemer by a seasonable submission to the despised ordinance of baptism; with whom we have enjoyed much sweet communion, his great design being to promote the honour and advance the interest of our King, by public declaration of his glorious mysteries.

[2] [Mr. John Tombes, the eminent scholar, and the author of several large and valuable works on the subject of baptism.]

We desire that you with cheerfulness receive him in the Lord, and hold such in reputation. Brethren, we do heartily commend you unto the Author and Finisher of our faith, in whom we are,

Your very loving brethren,

THOMAS TILLAM,	EDWARD STEPHENSON,
STEPHEN ANDERTON,	THOMAS OGLE,
JOHN CARNABIE,	JOHN ORDE.

From the church of Christ at Hexham, in Northumberland, 3rd m., 18 d., 1653.

JOHN THIRLWALL,	RICHARD ORDE,
MICHAEL AYDEN,	JOHN JOHNSON.

11. *The church at Leith to the church at Hexham.*

To the church of God in Hexham.[3]

Dearly beloved Brethren,—We salute you in our Lord Jesus Christ, wishing grace, mercy, and peace may be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of the Father, that you may have the full communications of grace and of the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, being filled with the Spirit of truth; and may grow up in all things into him who is your head, and may approve yourselves to be persons making it your great study to honour God in your generations; that so you may be [the occasion] of joy unto all God's people, and may indeed appear to be trees of righteousness of the Lord's own planting.

Beloved brethren, we are refreshed to hear of that eminent work of God that hath sprung up amongst you in these parts, in that he has pleased to add unto his church daily such as shall be saved; and to make you or any of you instruments in his hands to gather in the outcasts of Israel, and to bring

[3] [This letter would appear from No. 12 to have been brought to Hexham by Mr. Stackhouse, who had gone to Leith and returned.]

poor souls out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. Truly we desire to be affected with the goodness of God, in that he is going on to accomplish those precious promises which he hath said shall come to pass in these latter days. He hath said, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the tops of all the mountains in the earth, and shall be exalted above the hills. And he hath said, King Jesus shall be lifted up as an ensign, and many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Sion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem. We desire to believe that all these things are fulfilling, by these many signal testimonies that the Lord is pleased to give forth to his people, in bringing down the kingdom and power of antichrist, and in the enlarging, establishing, and erecting the kingdom of his dear Son.

Dear brethren, we trust your eyes have beheld the outgoings of God in these things, and do hope that your hearts are made alive, in some measure, in the consideration of it, and likewise made willing to wait upon the Lord in all obedience before him. And we entreat you not to be weary in well-doing, for the patient expectation of the poor shall never be forgotten.

Now, brethren, we commend you to the Lord, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to make you cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light; that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is your salvation nearer than when you believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Be you, therefore, diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot or blemish; having on the white robe of Jesus Christ, being always covered with the garment

of salvation, and clothed with the robe of righteousness; in which garment you may be able to stand, looking for and hasting unto the crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you and all that diligently look for his appearing at the last day; which is the earnest prayer of those who desire to approve themselves to be your faithful brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel of Christ,

JOHN CARLILE,
THOMAS POWELL.

Signed in the name, and by the appointment, of the church of Christ at Leith,[4] third month, 25th day [1653].

12. *The church at Hexham to the church at Leith.*

To the beloved spouse of the Lord Christ, walking in the blessed order of the gospel, at Leith, in Scotland.

Precious Brethren, — In the endeared bowels of unfeigned love we desire to breathe our salutes into your bosom; as those who have had rich experiences of your heavenly frame of spirit, in your Christian embraces of those members of our body, who by Providence have been cast among you. But especially of your saint-like love unto, and tender regard of this our dearly beloved brother, Mr. Tho. Stackhouse, in whose gospel-like visit we have been greatly refreshed, as also by the fair salutes from you, our much honoured sister church. We glory in the service wherein you have employed him for the enlargement of the borders of our Lord Jesus, whom we heartily bless for his supporting grace in these shaking revolting times; pre-

[4] [An edition of the Confession of 1644 was published at Leith. The preface concludes thus:—"Leith, the 10th of the first month, vulgarly called March, 1652–3, and signed in the name and by the appointment of the church of Christ meeting at Leith and Edinburgh, by Thomas Spencer, Abraham Holmes, Thomas Powell, John Brady." Rippon's Register, ii. 361.]

serving this our beloved brother stedfast in the faith. And now we return him to your lovely communion, in the unspotted robes of Christ's righteousness; humbly begging of God that a thousand-fold may be repaid into your bosoms, for those Christian encouragements which from you have greatly cheered the spirits of

Your faithful and affectionate
Brethren in the Gospel.

13. *The church at Hexham to Major General Lilburne.*

For the Right Honourable Major General Lilburne, the Commander-in-Chief over all the Forces in Scotland; these presents, Dalkeith.

Honoured Sir,—It hath been matter of great joy and consolation to our spirits, ever since we heard of the glorious appearances of the divine nature in you, which manifests itself through your love, which you have towards all saints, and particularly towards us. We desire to admire the good hand of our God in it, that we who are less than the least of saints should have favour given us in your eyes, whom God hath so highly honoured to set in a place of so great eminency. Whilst that our sometimes precious (but now, alas! deluded) brother, Mr. Edward Hickhorngill, continued in his stedfastness, oh! how welcome were his letters to us, and caused many thanksgivings by us unto our God in your behalf, when in them was made known unto us the interest you were pleased to vouchsafe him in your favours, and not only him but even this whole church; for whom we not only give thanks, but also for our brother Charles Bond, whose bowels you have sweetly refreshed in taking (as we hear) into a family relation to you. But most especially, that we may not be tedious unto you, we desire with all thankfulness to acknowledge your continued love to us, in your courteous and respective

entertainment of the bearer hereof, our dearly beloved brother Mr. Thomas Stackhouse; who, upon his return to us, made known your sweet and gracious deportment towards him, and your loving invitation of him that he would come unto you. We have therefore, having first sought the face of our God, and commended him unto the embraces of our Father through prayer, being assembled in one with one consent, sent him, and by this our epistle commend him unto you, and desire that you would own him as one whom we have in high repute for the gracious appearances of God which we have seen in him; and of whom we have this confidence, that he will approve himself, both to God and his people, such an one as we would.

Now the Father of mercies, and God of our comforts, who hath given us so great consolation through your bowels of love, return into your bosom sevenfold; that you may be comforted of God in what hour soever you shall stand most [in] need of it. And this confidence have we in our King, that since he hath promised that he will not let a cup of cold water, given to one that belongs to him, go unrewarded, surely he will not forget these refreshings, wherewith you have exceedingly made glad the spirits of those who cease not to make mention of your honour in their prayers.

Edward Browell,	Henry Angas,
Michael Aydon,	Tho. Tillam,
John Orde,	Stephen Anderton,
John Thirlwall,	Tho. Ogle,
Richard Orde,	John Carnaby.

From the church of Christ assembled at Hexham, 22nd day of the 4th month, 1653.

14. *Mr. Thomas Stackhouse to the church at Hexham.*

Dear Brethren,—After that the Lord had brought me safe hither, I was kindly entertained by Major General Lilburne in his house, who lovingly received the epistle, inquired of you all, and declared his joy in my return. It was his pleasure that I should continue here until Mr. Hickhorngill came back, and then if he refused to stand as formerly, to take me into the same relation. I was invited, and went to the church at Leith, where I obtained this enclosed for you. Touching that passage of their dealing with Mr. Hickhorngill, I did object that it was the judgment of some in the church at Hexham, that no person ought to have the censure of excommunication past upon him in any church, but in that only wherein he was first a member; and that it was conceived to be their duty only to admonish, withdraw, and certify concerning him. And therefore I desired some scripture from them that I might represent to you as a warrant for such a practice, for the satisfaction of those that question it. They offered none to me, save that of Titus iii. 10, and their unanimous approbation of it. Yet, nevertheless, they desired me to acquaint you, that they were willing, if you had an opportunity, that you rather should deal with him; because they apprehended you had wherewithal to charge him, which they had not. The 12th of this instant he came to Dalkeith in a swaggering garb, full of vain and idle discourse, and in my judgment a desperate atheist. He hath caused much sadness upon the spirits of all his brethren here. And the colonel professeth that he is very much afflicted in him. When at supper he was desired to crave a blessing, he publicly replied that his devotion was worn threadbare, and often saith that he hath left his religion in England. He saith that he went from hence a Quaker; but now hath attained to a better and higher dispensation, wherein he finds

much comfort, and rests upon the everlasting arm of his God, being overtaken neither with fear, anger, nor sorrow, but is full of joy in his God. And [he] propounds no other rule to himself but his reason, which if a man sin not against, he shall be happy enough. He seems to be very worldly, and is willing to stand as chaplain, though he will neither pray nor preach, otherwise than by common discourse. He is very cautious and sparing of his discourse with me. The reason he gives is, because he knows it is my principle to declare to the church what I know of him; and though he cares not a fig for excommunication, yet he would not be talked of in the world. He is very wicked and blasphemous. I have acquainted brother Tillam with some of his impieties, which I think he will communicate to you. Let him that stands take heed lest he fall.

And now, my dear brethren, if you consider my condition here, it will call for the improvement of all your interest at the throne of grace for me. My work is great; my strength is small. My life in every respect is a warfare. Corruptions within, enemies without. And though I never was in a condition wherein I might enjoy God and myself more fully, yet therein I see much danger, lest in this fat pasture I should lift up my heel against him that found out my way. My life hath been sweet to me, ever since I came from you, until Mr. Hickhorngill came, who troubles all that love the welfare of Sion, and causes them to vex their souls from day to day with his unlawful deeds. My brother Bond and I have had a sore trial. We have not wrestled with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickednesses in high places, having had many secret temptations stealing in upon us unawares, even the fiery darts of Satan, our wicked hearts being full of atheism. But blessed be God that hath given strength to overcome them, and hath taught us to deny the wicked one and his instru-

ments any further discourse. For why should we question the reality of those things which we have seen, and tasted, and handled? I am much refreshed when I think of your faith and love (Jam. v. 16), and I doubt not but you will be mindful of,

Your poor brother in the faith,

THO. STACKHOUSE.

Dalkeith, 5th month, 14th day, 1653.

15. *Letter of commendation.*

To all the churches of Christ in the grace and order of the gospel, joy and peace, with everlasting rest.

Holy and beloved,—After our dear salutations in the Lord Jesus, we offer unto your Christian communion, care, and guard, this our beloved brother, Hugh Hesloppe, who is baptized in the name of the Lord, and in full communion with us, your brethren; who do beseech you to open your arms of love to embrace and instruct him, according to the mind of Christ; in whom we are,

Your most affectionate brethren, praying for your flourishing estate in these days of the power of our Lord Jesus.

THOMAS TILLAM.

From the church of Christ at Hexham, in Northumberland, 23rd, sixth month, 1653.

16. *Edward Hickhorngill to the church at Hexham.*

For the church of Christ at Hexham.

Dear Friends, — I cannot but be sensible of the perseverance of your love and tenderness, signified in a letter to brother Stackhouse, notwithstanding my inexcusable slighting and neglecting you. And truly how much your patience

and long-suffering, after all my prodigal-like extravagances, hath wrought with me, I am not able to express. Blessed be God that hath not quite estranged the hearts of my dear brethren from me; but hath yet, through the abundance of his free love, not only afforded me smiles from himself, but hath given me a room (as I hope) in your hearts: which as I saddened too, too long, by a grievous apostacy, so now I doubt not but by an unfeigned return to rejoice you. For I can, through grace, experience that godly sorrow that worketh repentance never to be repented of; having wrought in me carefulness to walk more uprightly for the future; yea, what indignation to my former wildness; yea, what fear further to offend. Yet still are my temptations strong, and my strength weak, having a heart hankering after novelties which hath (I find) hitherto been my distemper, and partly the fuel of my extravagances. Let me, I beseech you, be happy in your fervent prayers to the Lord for me, and your Christian advice; and you will further be a comfort to me, and will add to all the former favours conferred upon

Your assuredly loving brother in the gospel bond,

E. Hickhorngill.

I am at present lieutenant to Captain Gascoigne, in Colonel Daniell's regiment, in this garrison of Johnston's; disposed hither by my old friend Colonel Lilburne, it being the first vacancy in Scotland after the resignation of my chaplain's employment. The brethren here at Johnston's are in good health, and would be glad to hear the same of you, and of the presence of the Lord with you.

St. Johnstons', 7ber, '53.

17. *The church at Hexham to the church in Coleman Street, London.*

To the church of Christ assembled in London, walking in the order of the gospel with our beloved brother, Mr. Hanserd Knollys. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

Dearly beloved Brethren,—We give thanks unto God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his exceeding grace to us-ward; praying always for you, since we read your letters, hoped and longed for by us, which greatly refreshed our hearts, and turned our hope of rejoicing into praises and thanksgivings for your consolation. And this is our rejoicing, that the Father of lights hath not only in some measure shined into our hearts through the gospel, and called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, having quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of the world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, being children of disobedience even as others; but also that it pleased the Lord when we were afar off, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and (as it were) without God in the world, to gather us who were scattered, and to call us into his fold, by that messenger of Christ, and your messenger, dearly beloved of us in the Lord, who is praiseworthy in the gospel among the churches—that we should be no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. And likewise that we should have a name and a memorial amongst the saints, who have obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of God; and a room in your hearts, beloved of God, having acknowledged us that we are your rejoicing, even as you also are ours. And we thank our God upon every remembrance of you, always in our prayers for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel

from the first day until now, and for your example in an holy conversation (whose faith, and love, and piety is spoken of every where), that we may be followers of you as you are of Christ, walking by the same rule. And we also rejoice in your joy, giving thanks unto God and the Father for your thanksgivings, labour of love, and enlarged hearts towards us. And the rather, because all these things were for our sake, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God, that worketh all in all according to the counsel of his own will, and for the good of his chosen. For which cause we faint not under our present affliction, but are exceedingly comforted in your consolation, whilst that we know we are but herein followers of our precious Lord and Master Christ, of you, brethren, and of all that were in Christ before us, who received the word in much affliction, and endured the same persecutions which we also endure with patience and joy in the Holy Ghost. So that we can say, whether you were afflicted, or whether you were comforted, it was for our consolation and salvation; knowing this, that through many tribulations we must enter [the kingdom of God], and our light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work for us an eternal and far more exceeding weight of glory.

Now, thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and gladdeneth our hearts with the savour of his knowledge, and communion with the saints in light. And we entreat you, brethren, that you would help together by prayer for us; that we may increase in all knowledge and spiritual understanding, being rooted and grounded in faith and love, and strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man; and likewise that we may be an honour to our profession, and so that they which speak ill of us may be ashamed, and beholding our good conversation in Christ may thereby be won to the obedience of the gospel. And we

pray for you, brethren, that the great Shepherd of the flock would lead you forth in ways of pleasantness and paths of peace; establishing you in his truth, and making you fruitful, abounding in the work of the Lord, that so you may yet thrust forth many more labourers into the harvest, which may turn many to righteousness, and make glad the city of God. And our hope of you is stedfast, that an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; in whom, with much joyfulness, we subscribe ourselves.

[3rd day, 7th month, 1653.]

18. *The church in Coleman Street, London, to the church at Hexham.*

From the church of Christ assembling in Coleman Street, London, 27th of the 7th month.

To our dear and well-beloved brother Tillam, with the the church of Christ at Hexham, grace, mercy, and peace, be ever renewed and multiplied in you all, from the God of grace and the Father of all mercies, through Jesus Christ; who is full of grace and truth, and is the way, the truth, and the life, to all those that have an interest in him, for whatever may be desired in the life of grace, and enjoyed to all eternity in the life of glory.

Desiring also to have you in remembrance, in making mention of you in our requests at the throne of grace; that our God would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the truth, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling in Jesus Christ, and may be able to prove what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; that through grace you may stand perfect and complete therein;

that so you may walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing. To that end the Lord guide you in the way that he shall choose, and make plain paths for you, leading you therein by his Spirit, ordering your steps according to his word, that you may not stumble in by-ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths and in a way not cast up; but in the highway which is called holiness, wherein the way-faring men, though fools, yet shall not err; unto which the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and his redeemed ones shall walk there, where they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sighing shall flee away. For the Lord meeteth those that rejoice and work righteousness, and remember him in his ways, and hold on therein; that go on from strength to strength, that they neither faint in walking, nor are weary in running, till they come to their Father's house, and rest from their labours.

In the mean while, the Lord help you to cast off every weight, and the sin, whatever it be, that doth so easily beset you, that you may run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto our Lord Jesus, the captain of our salvation, and the author and finisher of our faith; that you may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, holding fast the profession of your faith without wavering, till you come to the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Beloved brother, these may also give you to understand that we read your letter, dated the 3rd of this instant; the which was very welcome to us, not only for hearing of your affairs in the appearance of the Lord amongst you, for the which we have cause to rejoice in our God, and give thanks to our Father, as it is meet for us so to do; [but] because we hear of the growth of your faith, and that your love to each other aboundeth. We desire also to glory in our God, for

the patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you do, and have, endured, that you might be counted through grace worthy of the kingdom of God for which you suffer. Being not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord Jesus, you therefore are partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel.

We rejoiced also, in that you endeavoured to answer those particular objections that our brethren at Newcastle had against you, that thereby, if the Lord please, we may also endeavour to satisfy them. To that end we have written a letter to them, wherein we have given to them a copy of your answers to their objections. In the which we are satisfied only this:—we see no clear rule, nor example, for the presenting of little children in our arms to Christ for a blessing, though it be, we confess, our duty to pray for them, that the Lord would bless them. But in your expressions we understand, that through grace you would not go beyond rule, nor come short therein; which gives us occasion to hope, that you will go no further therein, than rule will lead you into; and then, we doubt not but we and your brethren shall be one with you.

And as concerning the ministry, by which many of us have through grace been converted, and if so let us bless God for it, whomever he was pleased to make instrumental therein, and leave them to stand or fall to their Master:—we speak this the rather, that this might remove and not cause division amongst brethren. Because we are not much concerned in it, whether they are the ministers of Christ or no. But as for our brother Kaye,[5] who, as we understand, being chosen by the mutual consent of the church of Christ, according to the order of his gospel, to be their minister, being fitted by the Lord thereto, we dare not but own him a minister of Christ, and so will our brethren also, we hope, at

[5] [See before, p. 292.]

Newcastle, if they see no clear ground to the contrary. And as for singing of psalms with the world, that is with the multitude where you meet, as you have borne testimony against it, so you would shun the appearance of it, from the first to the last. We write it to take off all occasions of offence, that so through grace you that have received grace from Christ, may so walk in him that you may be perfectly joined together in one mind and in one judgment, according to the mind of Christ; yet you may be at peace amongst yourselves, and then the God of love and peace will be with you.

We have desired in our letter to our brethren at Newcastle, that they would give you a meeting, and that you would speak together face to face. And the like we shall earnestly desire of you, to give them a meeting;[6] and if so, we desire that nothing may be done through strife, or from vain glory, but in all lowliness of mind, each esteeming other better than themselves. And let not every man look on his own things, but also on the things of others, that the same mind may be in you that was in Jesus Christ. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. And we do the more earnestly entreat you to have some conference with them, that, if the will of the Lord be [so], you may remove all dissensions and divisions [from] amongst you; and that every high thing in any of you, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, may be cast down, and that all may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; that Christ may be all and in all to you and amongst you.

It hath pleased the Lord, we hope, to put it into the hearts of the churches at London, with many other churches in other parts abroad, that have written lately to the churches of London, that there might be more knowledge taken of all the churches of Christ in the nation; whereby they may the better know how to own them, and demean themselves to

[6] [See before p. 295.]

each other upon all occasions; in confirming their love to each other, that they may serve one another in love, as it becometh saints.[7] And therefore it would much sadden our spirits, if there should be any occasion given or taken amongst you, that you might not be upon the hearts of the churches, in owning you as other churches. But if the Lord please to make us one, we hope it will much refresh and rejoice our spirits. We would also advise you, if you think meet, that our brother Kaye, with some of the brethren there, may be at the meeting; that so their state may be more fully known to our brethren at Newcastle. But if they understand that both you and they are churches constituted according to the gospel of Christ, we doubt not but they will be satisfied therein, and we shall be certified thereof suddenly by them; the which will give us occasion to glory in our God, and to be intimate in our hearts to each other. We desire to salute the brethren at Stokesley, praying for you all, that whatever you have heard and received from our Lord Jesus, you may hold it forth and hold it fast till he come. In the meanwhile, the Lord make you perfect in every good work to do his will, and work in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, and confirm you therein, to the end that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus. Farewell in the Lord.

Your brethren in the truths of Christ,

Joh. Perry, Elder,	William Jennings,
W. Howard,	Theodore Jennings,
Tru. Camfields,	Joh. Armiger,
Joh. Posse,	Thomas Buttivant,
William Spier,	Joh. Watson.

We shall desire to hear of the receipt hereof, with all conveniency.

[7] [On the 1st of June, 1653, a letter was addressed by the churches in Ireland to their brethren in England, inviting the latter to unite with them

19. *To the church at Hexham from various churches.*

To the church of Christ in Hexham.

Dearly beloved brethren in our Lord Christ,—We salute you in the Lord, praying for the multiplying of grace and peace upon you, from God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The report of the works of God in you and for you, in persuading your hearts to obey his will in being baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, whilst so many in all places endeavour to deter people from the embracing the plain precepts of Christ, and by all sorts of arts seek to darken the truth, and continue the profane abuse of infant sprinkling upon superstitious and Judaizing grounds, by which the reformation of the churches is hindered: and not only so, but that he hath kept you from those errors of universal grace, sufficient, but becoming effectual by the motion of man's will, not determined by God, [and] such other errors that corrupt other baptized people: and that he timely discovered that counterfeit Jew,[s] who was likely either to have corrupted you, or brought you into obloquy: and the keeping you, as we hope, unspotted of the world—hath filled our hearts with joy, and enlarged our hearts in thanksgiving to God. And so much the rather, because we hope that from you the truth of God may spread further, and your holy conversation provoke those that are averse from the right ways of the Lord, in which you walk, to consider their ways

in a monthly fast, and in mutual correspondence. The London brethren forwarded a copy of this letter to many country churches on the 24th of July. They state their design to be, to obtain a full account of all the churches in the kingdom, that a full knowledge might be possessed of all that were one with them "in the sound principles of truth." Among the names appended to this letter are those of John Perry, William Kiffin, and Edward Harrison. — Rippon's Register, App. p. 20.]

[s See before p. 292.]

and inquire after the mind of the Lord more earnestly. For all which reasons, and that there might be a holy union and correspondence held between us and you, as those that are members of one body, and have one spirit, [and] are called in one hope of our calling, having one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in you all, we have judged it our duty to write unto you, that we might congratulate with you for the mercy and grace of God vouchsafed to you, and assure you of our readiness to assist you in any work of the Lord, whereby the kingdom of Christ may be advanced, and the opposite dominions of what sort soever may be depressed.

As for yourselves, though we are confident that he who hath begun the good work in you will perfect it to the day of Jesus Christ, yet being sensible that you have potent adversaries, who will endeavour with all cunning and violence to cast you down to the earth, that you may lose the crown, we think it safe for you that you be exhorted by us to look to your garments, that they be kept clean, that you may be as the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom ye shine as lights in the world. And because your stedfastness will rest much upon your order and unity, we beseech you that you mark them that cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine you have received, and avoid them; and that you obey them that are over you in the Lord, who watch for your souls as they that must give account to God, that they may do it with joy and not with grief. Whatever differences may arise, labour to compose them among yourselves, and to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other before themselves. Love, humility, will help much to unity. Take heed of lightness and inconstancy. If any have private opinions, let them not be

divulged; but [let] each one seek privately information of their teachers, or such as are most able, and not zealously promote them without regard to the church's peace. Let every one study to be quiet, and to do his own business; remembering that as in the body all members have not the same office, so it is in the church, and therefore each member is to keep his own place, and therein abide with God.

Brethren, if it had seemed good to the Lord, we should have been glad if our dwelling had been nearer, that we might have visited you in person. But the Lord otherwise ordering it, we have contented ourselves only at this time to signify our mind to you by writing, hoping to hear from you of the grace of God to you, in preserving and increasing you in the knowledge of Christ, and love of God, unto eternal life. We further signify to you, our longing to have with you, and all the baptized churches that hold the faith purely, such communion as that we may by letters, or messengers, in some meeting or meetings, communicate to each other our knowledge, for the rectifying of each other, and retaining of consent of doctrine among the churches. And we further desire, that there may be some certain way of approving and sending teachers from the churches, and of signifying to all churches of our communion, who are approved or disallowed as teachers, or in case of removal as brethren, that the churches of God may not be deceived by such impostors as the counterfeit Jew with you; and that popish and other devilish practices to divide or corrupt them may be prevented; though we hope the pastors in every church will be very watchful in this thing. For [the] present we have no more to write to you; but to entreat your prayers for us, as we for you, that you may stand complete in all the will of God; to whose tuition we commend you, and remain:—

Your strongly enchained brethren, in the bond of perfectness, [and] the unfeigned love of you in the Lord.

In the name, and for the church at Weston under Penniard, in Herefordshire,

JOHN SKINNER, Teacher.
JOHN STREET,
JOHN SKINNER,
THOHAS RUDGE, } Brethren.

In the name, and for the church meeting at Abergavenny,[9] Monmouthshire,

WILLIAM PRITCHARD, Elder.
RICHARD ROGERS,
ANTHONY HARE,[1] } Brethren.

In the name, and for the church baptized in the Forest of Dean, in the county of Gloucester,

WILLIAM SKINNE,
JOHN MILLS, } Elders.
FRANCIS POBB,

In the name, and for the church at Lintile, in Herefordshire.

JOHN TOMBS, Pastor.[2]
JOHN PATSHALL,
JOHN WANCKLIN, } Elders.

In the name, and for the church at Bewdley,[3] in Worcestershire.

[9] [This church was formed in 1652, apparently by the advice of the church meeting at the Glass House, Broad Street, London, from whom a letter was received in the year previous, urging the brethren to divide into more particular congregations. Thomas' Hist. of Bap. Associations in Wales, Rippon's Register, p. 6.]

[1] [Thomas gives these names as William Prichard, Richard Rosser, Anthony Harry, p. 15.]

[2] [It is probable that most of these churches sprang from the preaching of Mr. Tombes. In this year, 1653, he held a public dispute on baptism at Abergavenny. The Leominster brethren were wont to meet at Mr. Patshall's house, and were constituted a church on the 25th Sept. 1656. Some of these churches seem to have held the duty of laying on of hands, Ivimey, ii. 203—208, 589. Contrary to Ivimey's opinion, it would seem that at this time Mr. Tombes had identified himself with the baptists.]

[3] [Crosby attributes the formation of this church to the labours of Mr. Tombes, during his residence at

THO. BOLSTONNE, } Elders.
PHILIP MUN, }
ROBERT GOODLAD,

In the name, and for the church at Netherton, in Gloucestershire.

RICHARD HARRISON,[4]
PAUL FRUM,[5] } Elders.
WILL. DREW, }

In the name, and for the church in the city of Hereford,

R. LONDON,
CHA. POWELL,
STEVEN CHAMBERLIN.

In the name, and for the church at Wormbredy.

JOHN BELL.

In the name, and for the church meeting in Coleman Street, Swan Alley, London (it coming to us) 2nd day of the 8th month, 1653.

HENRY JESSEY,[6] Teacher.
GEORGE BAGGOTT, } Brethren.
GEORGE WADDLE, }

The messengers from this our church, and that with our brother H. Knollys, and from Mr. John Simpson, and others, meeting at Blackfriars, wrote a large letter to you, many

Bewdley, as the parochial minister. On his departure, Mr. Bolstone, or Captain Boylstone, seems to have become its pastor. Crosby, i. 288.]

[4] [Mr. Harrison is said to have been a preacher at Hereford by Mr. Thomas. He is called "a noted popular baptist minister," p. 16.]

[5] [Probably Mr. Paul Frewen, who was ejected from Kempley at the Restoration. He was a good preacher, and very popular; and became minister of a church in Warwick. Palmer's Noncon. Mem. i. 546.]

[6] [This eminent man, for some time pastor of the first independent church in London, was baptized by Mr. Hanserd Knollys in 1645. During the Commonwealth he continued to lecture in St. George's church, Southwark; but was ejected at the Restoration. The locality of his church has till now been placed at Woodmonger's Hall. The letters now printed prove it to have been Swan Alley, Coleman Sereet. Wilson's Diss. ch. i. 46. Ivimey, ii. 216.]

weeks since, about nearer communion and provoking to pray for the pouring forth of the Spirit, for furnishing ministry, magistracy, &c. But we received no answer back, though you seem to say that you received that letter, in the letter written by Mr. Thomas Tillam to Mr. Tombs, dated 5th month, 26th day, '53.

20. *The church in Swan Alley, Coleman Street, to the church at Hexham.*

2nd of 8th month, 1653.

To our beloved brethren and sisters, the church of God meeting at Hexham, faith working by love be increased through the good knowledge of God our Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly Beloved,—It was much matter of joy to us, that by a hand of providence, this larger letter from some churches in Herefordshire, with whom we have communion, was sent to one of us to be sent to you; wherein we do sweetly accord, our hearts joining fully with the contents thereof, rejoicing to behold of late this good spirit that dwells in the churches of Christ, which are his temple, so uniting and knitting them together in the bond of love, and so seeking to enjoy more communion together amongst such as are sound in the faith, and that desire to walk as becomes the gospel.

And much refreshing hath our gracious God afforded to our spirits lately, at the return of a messenger and teacher of ours,[7] and of another of the church meeting at Great All-hallows, London (of which church about 200 have been baptized within these three years), who were sent to visit the churches nearer us than you, in the counties of Essex,

[7] [One of these was Mr. Jessey himself. "In summer, 1653, he was sent by divers churches to visit about thirty-six congregations in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Middlesex." Life, &c., p. 83, edit. 1671.]

Suffolk, and Norfolk, and to understand their way and order, and to further love, amongst all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and communion with them. Who returning, have related to us with what sweetness in love, and heart meltings in beholding the Lord's love to them herein, they were received in the Lord by the several churches, about ten in Essex, as many in Suffolk, and as many in Norfolk,; sound in the faith, and holy in life, though differing from some about the subject and manner of the ordinance of baptism; or [from] some about such laying on of hands, or blessing children, or singing psalms, or hymns, or spiritual songs, &c.; as they were advised also by these messengers.[8] And though every truth is good, yet we desire that in all churches all truths be managed in the wisdom of the Spirit, and in all love, considering 1 Cor. xiii. 1, and viii. 1, and Rom. xiv. and xv. chapters; Eph. iv.

We are not wanting to propound those six things that should [at] once be laid down, that are spoke of Heb. vi. 1, 2; and we endeavour to inform all therein that we judge faithful, being propounded to us, and to help the weak. But if some cannot receive what is held out about baptism, laying on of hands, or singing &c., and yet show forth teachableness and peaceableness, we dare not exclude such from the visible kingdom of God, merely for weakness' sake. Some scripture grounds for such practice are laid down in the book called "A Storehouse."[9] If any of us be otherwise minded, we are

[8] [These questions were agitated in all parts of the country at this time. At the Welsh Association in 1651, "Questions concerning singing psalms and laying on of hands were proposed to be considered by the churches." Thomas's Hist. in Rippon's Register, p. 7. See also the previous records in this volume.]

[9] ["A Storehouse of Provision, to further Resolution in severall Cases of Conscience, . . . About living above ordinances. About general redemption. About Separation, Offences, Baptism, and its use. About Communion with unbaptized [persons], &c. By H. Jessey, Lond., 1650." "From my Lodging in Coleman St., London, in Swan Alley."]

to wait in God's way, until he shall reveal that same thing. If herein you are not satisfied as we are, we shall be glad if there may be mutual help herein, or else, so far as we have attained, let us mind the same things, and be as helpful each to others as we can.

By what we have heard of you, we judge you are a church of Christ, with which he hath communion; and therefore we are willing to enjoy communion with you, as occasions may be. And we do entreat you to seek the face of the Lord in our behalf, that we may walk worthy in all well pleasing, so as to glorify his name, and to give no just occasion of offence to Jew or Gentile, to one or other; and we hope that herein also we shall be mindful of you. Being your loving brethren and fellow servants, and fellow heirs, though most unworthy.

In the name of, and for the church meeting at Swan Alley, in Coleman Street.

HENRIE JESSEY,[1] } Teachers.
GEORGE BURRET, }

MATH. STRANGE, }
GEORGE WARE, } Brethren.
THO. SHEFOLD, }

If you would write back to the churches in Herefordshire,

[1] [Although pastor of a pædobaptist church, Mr. Jessey did not relinquish his office when his sentiments on baptism were changed; but continued for twenty-five years to minister to them. Baptism never became a term of communion in his church. "Though formerly the whole, (and to his dying day, some) of the congregation was of the contrary judgment, yet no division or falling off did thence arise at all." In 1647, Mr. Jessey wrote: "This practice in our church [of mixed communion] above two years, hath produced no such ill fruits; but the contrary good, in procuring more to favour this baptism, or not so bitterly to oppose it; we all desiring to follow after love and peace, in humility forbearing each other therein, and have no cause of repenting; but of much blessing the Lord, for this our course herein." The practice of open communion seems to have begun with Mr. Jessey. Life, &c., pp. 9, 87. Storehouse, &c. p. 101.]

and know not so convenient a way, you may send your letters to London for Mr. Tombs, &c., to H. Jessey, in Swan Alley, in Coleman Street, who is willing to perform that service of love.

21. *The church at Hexham to the church in Swan Alley, Coleman Street, London.*

For our dearly beloved brethren and sisters, walking in communion with the Reverend Mr. Henry Jessey, in Swan Alley, in Coleman Street, London. Grace and peace be shed abundantly upon you, by the Spirit, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved in the Lord, — It hath been several times upon our hearts to return answer to your gracious epistle, sent to us many months since; but by reason of some, who seemed to be contentious, we have hitherto been hindered. For as the opposition hath been great, which we have met with from all hands, ever since we first made a visible profession of the despised truths of the Lord Jesus: so, especially, those conflicts have been most sad, which for some months last past we have had with the brethren of a neighbouring church,[2] who profess to walk by the same rule with us. A spirit of rigidness doth so far sway among them, that they cannot own us, because we can own unbaptized churches and ministers for churches of Christ and ministers of Christ; though we also judge in those churches and ministers something as to order wanting, which God in his own time may reveal unto them.[3] Although from others

[2] [Mr. Gower's charges were sent in the previous December. See before, p. 294.]

[3] [In "The Storehouse," from p. 96 to p. 122, Mr. Jessey treats at length of this subject. See also Bunyan's Works, p. 591, vol. ii. Offor's edit. Bunyan quotes Mr. Jessey's opinion in support of his own, against Mr. Kiffin and Mr. Paul.]

we have endured cruel buffetings, yet these have made long furrows upon us. Neither yet are our breaches healed, though we wait and pray for the healing of them. But our thanksgivings unto our God are upon every remembrance renewed in your behalf, for the gracious healing frame of spirit which breathes in and through your lines to us. It was sweet refreshing unto our spirits; and we were comforted in your joy, to hear of the prosperity of Sion, and that in several counties the standard of the Lord Jesus is set up, and many there be that flock unto it, who are sound in the faith and holy in their conversation.

Holy and beloved brethren, our hearts' desires and prayers to God are, that we may be one with all those who have union with the Father and the Son, by his Spirit, in all the ordinances of the gospel. As to the deformities which are found in the churches of the saints, if but merely circumstantial, we desire to walk by the same rule with you, Phil. iii. 15, 16. And as many as walk according to it, peace shall be upon them. It would be exceedingly for our consolation, if (as oft as God shall give you an opportunity) we may hear of your affairs, and of every design which God shall put into your hearts, and of the rest of the precious churches of Christ near unto you, for the promoting in the world the royal interest of the Lord Jesus.

Finally, brethren, we pray for you, and desire you to continue in prayer for us, that we may be kept stedfast and unblamable in faith and holiness, always abounding in the work of our Master, that at his coming he may find us so doing; in whom we [are],

Your fellow servants and companions,

THOMAS OGLE, THO. TILLAM,
ROWLAND HARRISON, STEPHEN ANDERTON.
JOHN WARD,

Signed by the appointment of the church, 2nd, 20th, 1654. [April 20th, 1654.]

JOHN THIRLWALL,
JOHN READSHAW, } Deacons.

22. *The church at Hexham to the church at Leominster.*

To the church of God which is at Leominster, with all those holy societies walking in brotherly communion, under the vigilant guard of faithful overseers.

Unsearchable riches of grace be abundantly poured upon you, from the faithful Witness, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.

Holy and Beloved, — Your evangelical epistle, many months since read amongst us,[4] was even as health unto our navel and marrow to our bones. Wherein we have greatly rejoiced, looking therein to God's gracious design of refreshing our fainting spirits, and through you, in the midst of those afflictions which we have through grace been counted worthy to suffer, ever since we owned and professed the despised truths of the Lord Jesus, so valiantly maintained by the constant labours of that faithful and good soldier of the Lord of hosts, in whose endeavours (as all the saints, so) you in a special manner are blessed.[5] The many contradictions we have met with must needs make us more truly sensible of his combats and affronts from time to time, both in

[4] [See Letter 19.]

[5] [Probably Mr. John Tombes. He was born in 1603, and settled at Leominster as its parish minister about 1630. He was baptized about 1646, and removed to Bewdley, his native place. He was one of the most learned men of his day. He addressed the Assembly of Divines on the question of baptism, but without effect. In 1653 he was appointed by parliament one of the Triers of Ministers, and held the living of Bewdley. After the Restoration he conformed; but without surrendering his views on the invalidity of infant baptism. Crosby i. 278, 292, iii. 2.]

England and Wales. We hope, dear brethren, you need no motives to put your shoulders to this great task, by your fervent prayers, &c. And as we desire unfeignedly to bless God for that eminent worthy in our Israel, so for you all, in beholding that blessed band of love, so firmly fastened about so many precious congregations; which makes you very amiable in our eyes, as in the eyes of him whose heart your chain hath ravished. But, alas! dear brethren, we have never so much as tasted of such a mercy, being by the wise hand of God congregated in such a corner, where we have been so far from this glorious gospel privilege; that even that only[6] church in this county, which was in the profession of the faith before us, hath rather weakened our hands in the Lord's work, through much harshness (as we humbly conceive); striking at our very foundation, because we dare not but own godly preachers and congregations (though unbaptized) as ministers and churches of Christ. For though as touching baptism we look on them as deficient, yet beholding so clear a seal to their ministry, we are even constrained to bear this testimony. For though such be not ministers to others, yet doubtless they are to many of us, who cannot claim any work of conversion but even through such instruments.

And truly, brethren, these saddest conflicts have thus long occasioned our silence. But now, our God seemeth to moderate the spirits of our brethren, and through grace hath kept us sound in the faith, not any of us tainted with that Arminian poison that hath so sadly infected other baptized churches.[7] Only those deceived souls, called Quakers, have

[6] Newcastle, sixteen miles from us.

[7] ["This opinion of freewill, with the rest therein exprest, doth increase so much in these northern parts, and it comes with such a face of rationality, that many poor precious hearts who are weak in the faith are apt to stumble, and in an especial manner some about Hull, where I was an eye and ear witness not long since of the sad disaster that is befallen the church of Christ there upon that account."—*Hobson's Fourteen Queries*, &c., Preface, Lond. 1655.]

been very active in these parts, and have seduced two of our society and six of Newcastle church. And now, dearly beloved, having truly acquainted you with our state, we being about seventy persons (the greater number men), all kept alive from the first day (almost two years) until now, we beg your praises, your prayers, your consolatory returns, not taking example by our long silence, whereby we have been even constrained. And now the blessed presence of Christ be ever with you, and bear you up steadfastly in his everlasting arms, waiting for our Lord's return, Heb. ix. 28, in whose rest we shall meet, and rejoice with all our precious brethren and sisters, who shall then fully experience the truth of Paul's doctrine, 2 Cor. iv. 14—18; with joint expectation whereof, we rejoice to subscribe ourselves,

Your endeared brethren in the faith of God's elect,

THO. TILLAM.

23. *The church at Stokesley to the church at Hexham.*

To the pastor and brethren of the church of Christ gathered in or about Hexham, grace and peace be multiplied.

Dearly beloved Brethren,—The sweet savour of the gracious expressions manifested in your pastor's letter sent unto ours, being communicated unto us, hath refreshed our souls, and no less increased our thirstings after the enjoyment of your prosperity, we being desirous to be mutual instruments to establish one another; that is, that we may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and us, Rom. i. 11, 12; that all of us, as a cloud of witnesses, may follow our Forerunner, the Author and Finisher of our faith, in whom alone all the churches are completed, to buy and sell, without any mark or stamp of man's approbation; so that as distinct bodies (though but as members of one mystical body, whereof Christ is the head), we are so

sensible of our duties, as being bound with the ligaments of faith and love, as that we cannot but either mourn, or rejoice, and join in any duty of love with you, our dearly beloved sister church. And therefore, though we do not doubt but that you have spread the libels and despiteful printed pamphlets, like the letter of railing Rabshakeh, before the Lord, Isa. xxxvii. 14, compare Acts iv. 29; and looked upon the stones that cursed Shimei cast at David (as their violence that have assaulted the state of our dear brother and your pastor) with that Christian application, that (which to the blind world seems miraculous) you have already eaten your hidden manna, in the enjoyment of your peace, which the world cannot take from you; and thereby see the evidences of your salvation, and [are made] with your brethren to be conformable to Christ in sufferings: yet, nevertheless, we cannot but incessantly pray (as our duty, and as desired) that your faces may shine through the mire and dirt which the troubled sea hath cast upon you; that you all, like Paul and Barnabas (when the envious multitude contradicted and blasphemed), may wax more and more bold in the Lord, Acts xiii. 45, 46. And we hope that the blast of reproaches shall not blow out your light; but that it being set on a hill may burn more clearly, and thereby, Job-like (Job xxiii. 10), you become tried gold. For though Satan always hath acted in his instruments, to blaspheme those who have been chosen witnesses for the planting of the gospel in the primitive churches, in opposition to the world of heathens and Jewish church, as now we are engaged, to the ruin of antichrist, yet they have flourished.

Be ye therefore encouraged in the Lord. Rejoice and be exceeding glad. Christ must have his cross carried, and none more fit than we to bear it. Look up, it is white unto harvest. The dawning of the day of the reign of the saints is already begun, so that this sun shall be dried up, or kept

within its own channel. That God shall beat down Satan under your feet shortly, you need not fear. Nor shall you want our prayers, nor our assistance in any [matter] wherein we can serve you. And as a little taste of the fruit of our vineyard (returning you thanks for yours), we desire your acceptance of this inclosed, as being our experience, desiring the saints' prayers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Peace be with you all. Amen.

Written by W. KAYE, Pastor.

And signed with approbation of the church of Christ, now at Stokesley, by the testimony of

GEORGE BUTLER.
THOMAS YOUNG.

24. *The church at Newcastle to the church at Hexham.*

Dear Friends, — We salute you in the Lord, wishing grace, mercy, and peace to be multiplied upon you, from God the Father, through the Lord Jesus.

The cause of our writing to you at this time, is in reference to a letter we received from Mr. Tillam about some things he had against Major Hobson,[8] who, through mercy, at this time is a brother with us. Although the ground of Mr. Tillam's information was from Mr. Hammond's letter, who

[8] [He is said by Dr. Calamy to have been ejected from the chaplaincy of Eton College, at the Restoration. In 1639 he took part in forming a baptist church in Crutched Friars, and with Mr. Gower signed the Confession of 1644, as an elder of one of the seven churches in London. He became after this a captain in the army; but when he and Mr. Gower came to Newcastle is uncertain, Crosby, iii. 26. In 1655 he published a small volume, which seems to have originated with the disputes referred to in this letter. It is entitled, "Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities;" and relates to the extent of Christ's death, to predestination, and kindred subjects. He calls himself a member of the church at Newcastle. There is also prefixed a recommendatory epistle from Mr. Thos. Gower.]

we fear hath prejudicial thoughts, not only against Major Hobson, but against Mr. Tillam, or any that are opposite to him. And that we judge you are sensible of as well as we, which gives us less ground of jealousy. [As it] ought [to be] considered to God as well as in answer to Mr. Tillam's desire, we thought it our duty to search the business to the bottom, and for that end we did appoint some of our brethren to go to Mr. Hammond,[9] to know of him these three things:—first, whether he did inform Mr. Tillam; if he did, what ground he had for it; thirdly, the time when this should be. For the first, he acknowledged that he wrote such a letter. And for the second, we find the greatest ground of his reports was from the reports of others. And as for the last thing, which was the main thing, that is, the time when these things should be, whether it was since he set out his last book; or since he propounded himself to us; or whether it was before God met with his spirit, when he was in the ways of his wantonness; he did acknowledge that those things he did accuse Major Hobson of in his letter, were things done before the fore-mentioned time, and that since those times he cannot accuse him of any such things, and therefore we judge it no sufficient ground to hinder his joining with us, knowing that God hath been pleased, through his grace and love, to make him with shame to be more ready to accuse himself, and acknowledge his own evil committed in those days of wantonness, than any can be to accuse him. And we trust through grace it will appear to you and all the world, that he is not a lover but a loather of all such unworthy practices. Now, dear friends, we could not but let you know so much, being persuaded you know of the letter Mr. Hammond wrote to Mr. Tillam, and Mr. Tillam to us. And we are the rather provoked to write to you, fearing such

[9] [Probably minister of St. Nicholas, Newcastle, and who wrote against the false Jew. Douglas, p. 60.]

reports may cause your spirits to slight and question the gracious and kind dealings of God with his soul. Besides we had some information that this report Mr. Tillam had from Mr. Hammond, is by some reported to the men of the world. But at present we cannot accuse any [one in] particular, until we are further informed. But if any such things should be, we judge it very unsuitable to the rule of truth. These things we thought good to present unto you, for your satisfaction as well as our own. So desiring the God of all grace to keep both you and us from embracing of, or acting in, any thing but what we may cheerfully look God in the face in the great day of the Lord, to whose grace we leave you, and remain,

Your desirous brethren in truth and love, if the way were clear in all gospel bonds. By the appointment of the church of Newcastle.

THO. GOWER, LEWIS FROIST,
JAMES TURNER, JOH. CARRATH.
GEOR. OLIVER,

We shall write to Mr. Tillam when we hear of his return.

Newcastle, May the 28th, 1654.

25. *The church at Warrington to the church at Hexham.*

Dearly Beloved in the Lord, our hope and our joy,—The choicest graces and spiritual blessings be multiplied and continually flowing into your souls, from that eternal Fountain whence refreshing streams of divine consolation have (through grace) been conveyed unto us, by his eminent (by us entirely affected) servant of Jesus Christ,[1] who we trust will be instrumental (in the hand of our God, whom we serve)

[1] [Probably Mr. Tillam.]

to carry on both you and us in this our pilgrimage, in a progress of grace, so as one day he may present us with exceeding joy, one pure and spotless virgin, before our Redeemer; when he of whom the Lord hath made such a blessed use, shall shine as a star in glory.

Precious brethren, that we faint not in our journey, how necessary is it that our joint interest be mutually improved at the throne of grace in each other's behalf, that in these dangerous declining times, when it is evident our grand adversary, perceiving his tottering kingdom near a fall, is employing his utmost force and deepest subtleties to delude and draw poor souls from their profession.

We desire to magnify the name of our God for [that] refreshment to our spirits received by your sweet epistle, wherein doth appear the stedfastness of your faith in Jesus Christ, maugre all the malice manifested by the endeavours of the enemy and his instruments, some of whom have been busily employed in these parts to the seducing of many. Yet through mercy we stand, to the praise of the glory of that grace which we acknowledge our support.

We bless God for the continual enlargement of your hearts to the liberty of our dearly beloved brother's stay with us, though God is pleased to order it now but short.

Brethren, we beseech you pray for us, that the knowledge of Jesus Christ may increase amongst us; that we may come to a more clear apprehension of that great mystery, God in Christ and Christ in us, united and made one with him by the eternal Spirit. Then shall we perfectly see the tabernacle of God dwelling with men, and have occasion (from such blessed communion) to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; when all doubts and distractions will be passed away, no night or cloud interpose betwixt our souls and the love of our precious Redeemer. Ah! this would be a precious pledge, or earnest, of that glorious condition unto which

we [shortly] shall be translated, where we shall have a full enjoyment of him, whom now our souls are thirsting after, in inconceivable and eternal glory.

Peace be to you all, and love with faith, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; in whom we are,

Your entirely affectionate brethren,

Will. Booth,	Tho. Follings,
Peter Eaton,	Tho. Holland,
John Tomleson,	Charles Holland,
Robert Millington,	Ric. Amery.
John Sprosgon,	

Warrington,[2] 4th month, 26th day, 1654.

26. *The church at Hexham to the church at Newcastle.*

Dear Friends, — We salute you in the Lord, praying that abundance of grace, and of the sweet Spirit of the Lord Christ, may be manifested in the midst of you.

We have, after many prayers, some conferences with you and sober replies, for many months sat down in silence, waiting when the Prince of peace, who delighteth to see his people walk in love, would rebuke that spirit of bitterness and perverseness, which hath so long walked betwixt you and us. But now, alas! to the amazement of our spirits, when we hoped for healing behold contention, and when we looked for a closure behold a widening of our breaches. When your late letter, sent to our precious bro. Tillam, was with grief by him spread before us, it caused a sympathising sadness upon our hearts, when we heard your lines fraught with so much

[2] [Mr. Douglas supposes this church to have been the same with that at Hill Cliff, Cheshire, some of whose members probably resided at Warrington. "It is known they were a zealous people, as they afterwards laid the foundation of a church in Liverpool." Hist. of Bap. Ch. in N. of England, p. 58.]

prejudice against him, whom we own and have proved truly faithful, both to us and to you, and all the people of God as he hath opportunity. It is and hath been his and our burden, and we must bear it, that the more we love you the less we are beloved of you. If our beloved brother Tillam had, out of his zealous affection for your welfare, acted something besides rule, which we judge in that business he did not, you ought rather to have forgiven him the wrong in love, than so highly (though without grounds) in your letter to have censured him for it. Since that what he did was in love and tenderness, which he bears to the honour of the Lord Jesus, and the preserving of your communion spotless, in case the things which were reported of brother Hobson had been a truth.

We are so far from judging our brother Tillam to have acted disorderly, that we are satisfied his carriage in that business was according to the mind of Christ; and we dare affirm it before the Lord and his saints, that he had been both wicked and unfaithful to his master, and [to] you his people, if he had not put you upon the inquiry into such reports, whether they were true or no. His work was only to be a monitor to you, not an accuser of your brother Hobson. What he did was to put you upon your duty, which was to inquire after, not to charge any evil upon him, as from his own knowledge. We had rather bewail than aggravate the many ungospel-like actings which in your letter you appear guilty of, whilst you would charge brother Tillam with the guilt of one. Your particular irregularities, and his defence, you may expect from his own pen to be presented to you. We thought it our duty to leave this our sad resentment with you of your carriage towards him, and through him towards us; and to desire that you would seriously lay to heart, how mightily the Lord Christ suffers through our divisions. Oh! what a vast deal of ground,

ere this day, had the Lord Christ gotten in the kingdom of Satan and antichrist, which stands yet little or nothing broken in these parts, had a healing spirit timely interposed itself, so that we might as one man have put our shoulder to the work of God. Consider, we pray you, whether may not the apostacy of some, the staggerings of others that yet stand, the discouragement of weak ones whose faces are Sion-ward, yet do keep at distance, not thinking it safe to close with those who are not at unity among themselves:—consider, we pray you, whether all of these and many more, shall not be scored up upon the account of our unhappy differences. We leave these upon your spirits. The Lord make them of weight with you, that yet at the last, if it be the will of God, all bitterness may be taken out from among us, aud a happy composure wrought among those who profess themselves—

Yours in the unity of faith and baptism,

RICH. ORDE, } Elders.
JOHN WARD, }

JOHN THIRLWALL, } Deacons.
JOHN READSHAW, }

STEPHEN ANDERTON,
JOHN CARNABY,
ROWLAND HARRISON,
ANTHONY HUNTER,
JAMES CARRE,
JOHN JOBLIN,
ADAM STEPHENSON,
ANTHONY COLLYER,
EDWARD BELL,
MICHAEL AYDEN,
HENRY ANGUS,
MARK TAYLOR,
JOHN JOHNSON,
JOHN ORDE,
EDWARD BROWELL.

Signed by the appointment of the whole church of Christ, assembled at Hexham, 6th month, 3rd day, 1654.

For our friends in Newcastle, walking in communion with Mr. Thomas Goare [Gower].

27. *The church at Newcastle to the church at Hexham.*

Dear Friends, for so we must needs call you, though at present we cannot own you as we desire,—We received an answer to a charge of ours, with all or many of your hands at it, wherein Mr. Tillam, with you, endeavoured to give us satisfaction; which answer of yours we have received, and do judge it insufficient. It doth not in the least reach or amount to that as to give us any satisfaction, but by it we remain rather more dissatisfied; by reason of those evasions, and not that simple and single-hearted dealing in the things of God, as the gospel of Christ calls for at your and our hands. The reason of our writing now is, for fear lest you, or some of you, either have had, or may have, some hard thoughts of us, in that we have not returned you an answer to your reply to the charge; which charge and answer we have sent to London, to the church where he was a member, conceiving of it [as] the only equallest way that we could walk in; and not only so, but most suitable to a rule in our judgments and understandings, (in regard we could not own you [as a church] according to a gospel rule, however you seem much to be satisfied in yourselves that you are so), that they might judge righteously between you and us, and also deal with your brother Tillam for his several evils there charged against him. Now this is the only reason we have to give you, why we did not meddle any further in reply to you, though there was then intended by some of us a taking notice of the answer, wherein it was short of satisfaction, seeing what we did was done principally with reference to them who (we trust) stand fast in the same faith and practice with us; who did at the first write to us about you, desiring (if it were possible) that there might be closure between you and us. Therefore we desire, if there have been any misconstruction put upon our silence to your answer to the charge, that you

impute it not to us for the forementioned reasons; because we could not well appeal to him nor you, judging you to be under sin with him, Psa. l. 18; in that you have made his actions yours, by owning of or consenting to them, and not yet as we hear repenting of it by a public disowning of them. Therefore what we have done was to satisfy those that were in communion with us, namely, the churches at London;[3] and therefore absolutely did judge ourselves no further engaged to you.

Yet, however, we are willing to let you know this, that we may lie under no just censure from you in this business. But that as our consciences are clear in the sight of God in this business, so it may be in yours also. Therefore, dear friends, be pleased to excuse us because we deal plainly. It is for God, and not for men, that we desire to judge. Therefore we hope we shall be the more excusable in your consciences, for we do verily believe our plain dealing with Mr. Tillam and you, will meet us with comfort at the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be judged according to the gospel. If we were in, or could be yet in, a capacity to do any Christian duty or office of love to you, we shall, we hope, and will remain willing. However, we cannot do that for you our souls desire at present.

Oh! dear friends, consider why will ye yet keep up that which makes this distance between you and us? and why will you suffer yourselves to be robbed and spoiled of that comfort your precious souls seek out after, by going out of Babylon by half? Flee out of her. Be not partakers of her sins, lest you be partakers of her plagues. Why will you suffer yourselves and us to be robbed of that comfort and communion we might have together? Why will you keep up that which neither God nor his truth enjoins you; we

[3] [See before p. 294.]

mean, the forementioned cause of distance? And why will you walk so uncharitably as you do towards us, seeing you own us a sister church with you, in that you will not remove the cause of our offence, trouble, and distance? Truly did that spirit of love and tenderness live in your hearts as lives in Christ's, you would not thus occasion this trouble and matter of sorrow and grief to us, as you do, by such an unsuitable walking. Therefore, pray consider and forsake that which is sinful; we mean, all those ownings and pleadings for that which you have pleaded for in your answer to our charge, with all other things that are justly a cause of difference between us, that the truth of God doth not approve of. Then, we trust, we shall be found meeting you in a way of truth and righteousness, doing our duties faithfully towards you, as such as are truly resolved to live and walk with Christ, upon a single and simple-hearted account.

We have no more to say at present; but to leave you to and with the Lord, and the simple consideration of what we have here faithfully [written] to discharge our duties to you in all gospel ways. With that gospel frame of spirit at present we stand in, and shall subscribe ourselves,

Your friends, and desired brethren,

LEWIS FROST,
JO. CARRUTH,
GEORGE OLIVER,
MICH. DARKER,
ANDREW JOPLIN,
JAMES TURNER,
THOMAS GIBSON,
THO. GOWER,
HENRY HUDSON,
SIMON. DUXBURY,
JOHN READSHAWE,
ROBERT BLENKINSOPP,
MICHAEL CATESWORTH

This was signed by the appointment of the whole church.

We have this to add, that if you desire a particular answer to your answer to our charge, we shall be ready to give it you, in a suitable and seasonable time, for your particular

satisfaction. Only we desire you will be pleased to send us a copy of your commission to preach, which you had from the propagators,[4] and a copy of your order when you went to Hexham, and a copy of your order by which you receive your maintenance.

In the behalf of the whole, I, being appointed, do subscribe.

THOMAS GOWER.

From the church of Christ at Newcastle, to our dear friends at Hexham, 27th day of the 6th month, 1654.

28. *A Letter of commendation.*

To all the saints walking in the order of the gospel, grace and peace be multiplied.

Beloved in the Lord, — After our dear salutes in the Lord Christ, we commend unto you this our precious and dearly beloved sister in the Lord, Elizabeth Heslop, who hath obtained the like precious faith, and submitted to the same baptism with us, and hath continued in full communion with us from the first day until now. Receive her, therefore, we pray you, into your Christian embraces. For this confidence we have of her, that she will prove an ornament to the gospel, and give you occasion to rejoice in her communion; which will be matter of great consolation to our spirits, who are—

Your most endeared brethren, praying for your stedfastness in the faith, and your perfection in every good word and work,

STEPHEN ANDERTON,	MICHAEL AYDON,
RICHARD ORDE,	ROBERT ELWOOD,
JAMES CARRE,	JOHN ORDE.

From the church of Christ meeting at Hexham, in Northumberland, 11th day, 7th month, 1654.

JOHN THIRLWALL.

[4] [See before, note, p. 304.]

29. *The church at Hexham to Sir Thomas Liddell.*

From the church of Christ, assembled at Hexham, 7th month, 1654.

For the Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Liddell.[5]

Worthy Sir, — The many and sweet experiences which this poor despised church hath had of your and your precious lady's[6] favours, have solemnly engaged us to honour you, and we look upon it as a duty incumbent upon us to acquaint you, that you have a large interest in our hearts, and a choice room in our prayers. It hath been many times as marrow and fatness to our spirits, when we have heard of your love, which you bear to the meanest that bear anything of the image of the Lord Jesus. But, oh! what consolation was it to us, when we heard of your bowels and tender affection towards our dearly beloved, but now, alas! sadly afflicted sister, Elizabeth Heslopp, in this day of her deep distress. In our greatest sadness for our sister, this was even as life from the dead to our drooping spirits, to hear of those yearnings of bowels which your ever to be honoured lady had concerning her, her many thoughts of heart for her, her sympathising with her, her care and endeavours how to bring her back, and your receiving again into your house and respects a poor afflicted member of Jesus Christ. This is such an eminent act of your goodness, that it hath even overcome our hearts, and all our thanks are below it. Only this confidence we have in our King, whose we are and whom we serve, that he will not suffer your goodness to go unrewarded. If but a single cup of cold water, given to one that belongs to Christ, hath verily a reward,

[5] [Of Ravensworth Castle.]

[6] [Lady Liddell was the daughter of the distinguished Sir Henry Vane.]

Mar. ix. 41, we believe and do assure ourselves that the good things ministered to our sister, in the days of our Master's appearance will be found to your praise and honour. Christ scores up your favours to her upon his own account. His answer, in that day of his return, Matt. xxv. 40, will be a satisfactory requital. In the meantime, we will not cease to make mention of you in our prayers, that God would comfort your hearts, even in the like measure as she and we have been consolated in your loves; that he would show mercy to you in that hour wherein you shall stand most in need of it; that he would reveal whatsoever of his counsel and will is wanting in you; that he would water with the dews of his grace the sweet pledges of your loves, those olive branches that are planted about your table; that he would recompense your loves sevenfold into your bosom here, and fit and prepare you for that glory, which we wait and press after, in ways of his own appointment. To his embraces we commend you, and take leave to subscribe ourselves,

Your thankful servants for Christ's sake,

Tho. Tillam,	Hugh Heslop,
S. Anderton,	Henry Angas,
John Thirlwall,	John Joblin,
John Johnson,	Rich. Orde.

30. *The church at Hexham to the church at Newcastle.*

To our long expected and much desired brethren.

Dear Friends, — We salute you in our precious Lord Jesus, wishing you well in him; desiring that the choicest graces of God's Spirit may be multiplied upon you.

The cause of our writing to you at this time is in reference to your last letter, wherein you gave us the reason of your so long silence in not letting us know your mind concerning brother Tillam's answer to your charge, wherein

you do declare your great dissatisfaction; but no substantial grounds [do] you give us why you are not satisfied, as we judge. Because the ground of your dissatisfaction we cannot understand, as you describe it to us in these terms; you say, you are more dissatisfied by reason of these "evasions," &c. Dear friends, we desire you to let us understand what you mean by your term "evasions," &c. For we conceive there may be several things in it which we cannot rightly understand, unless you do expound it to us, and give us the proper meaning thereof in plain words. And whereas you seem to charge us, that there is not that simple, single-hearted dealing in the things of God that the gospel of Christ calls for at our hands and yours, truly we cannot but say the same. Therefore, pray consider. Is this plain, simple, single [-hearted] gospel dealing, to use such mystical terms as "evasions," &c., to those who are called by you friends? Surely the gospel of Christ teacheth neither you nor us such things. We beseech you with us to take Christ's counsel; that is, first to cast the beam out of your own eye, and then will you see clearly to pull the mote out of your brethren's. And although you make your appeal to the church of London your defence, to clear you as not being any further engaged to us, either to assent to, or dissent from, brother Tillam's answer to the charge; but all this while you have sat in silence, we have ground to fear with prejudiced thoughts against him and us; and though you desire us not to impute your silence to you, yet, give us leave to tell you, that, as far as we are able to judge, you are very far remiss in that thing. For you did charge our brother Tillam with many things, which yet you never proved against him, nor we think never shall. For we must tell you, we have more ground to believe brother Tillam's answer to your charge, as judging him faithful, than to believe any thing in your charge against him unproved. And whereas you say, you could not

appeal to him nor us, judging us with him to be under sin; we cannot but blame you in this, that your love to us should so little appear, as to suffer him so long to lie upon us, if you judged us under sin; whereas you ought rather to have laboured in the thing, that you might have been instrumental to recover us out of sin. For truly we hope and do believe that there is such a principle of God in him and us, that whensoever, or by what means soever, sin is discovered to us, we shall no longer live in it, nor plead for it; but with all our might and strength labour to get out thereof ourselves, and oppose in others, wheresoever we meet with it. Now, dear friends, we beseech you as you will answer Jesus Christ, at the day of his appearing, that you charge nothing upon brother Tillam or us but what you can clearly prove, either from the scriptures, or by sufficient witness. And we hope, if we be in anything remiss, or walk contrary to a gospel rule, we shall submit.

And whereas you say, we rob and spoil ourselves of that comfort our souls seek after, by going out of Babylon by halves: dear friends, consider. Have we been so long a time in the profession of the same truth which you do own, and do you judge us yet but half come out of Babylon? Surely, if you had no love to us, your zeal to Christ and truth should more appear by your earnest endeavouring to help us wholly out of her, that we might not be partakers of any of her sins. Now, dear friends, if you can make it appear that we are yet in anything uncome out of Babylon, if yourselves be escaped sure your duty is, when you are converted, [to] strengthen [your brethren]. Now, dear hearts, our whole desire is, that you and we all may consider, how sad it is that you and we, who profess all one truth, should walk at such a distance, having love so little continued amongst us, and our hearts so little drawn out to seek after peace and unity. Oh! that you and we may seriously lay to heart

these things in time, lest we be found to be disturbers of Sion's peace, and hinderers of her prosperity. So that by these things, you and we had need to take heed we do not provoke the Lord to say, as once he said to his people of old, "I sought for a man amongst them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap; but I found none."

These things we leave to your consideration, desiring that the Lord of his goodness, in his own time, would be pleased to remove all scruples and stumbling blocks out of the way, and [that] all that roughness of spirit [be] taken away which hath long passed between you and us, so that we might walk together as brethren, in love, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; so that we might all endeavour ourselves to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Written by Elder Warde, and signed by the church.

31. *The church at Newcastle to the church of Hexham.*

From the church at Newcastle to Mr. Tillam, and those walking under baptism with him at Hexham.

Dear Friends, — We salute you in Lord, desiring through his grace you may appear in that sincerity, singleness, and simplicity of heart which the gospel requires, and that you may daily grow in power and principle suitable to the living plants in God's house; who amongst the wise virgins may have oil in your vessels, as well as light in your lamps, when Christ our Lord shall appear.

We could not but embrace this opportunity to write a few lines in answer to your last, to remove those mistakes which we judge lie upon you, in misapprehending our intention in our letter to Mr. Tillam concerning our brother Hobson. The Lord knows our hearts, that we did

not do it to make the breach between you and us wider, nor as a new charge against Mr. Tillam, as he is pleased in his to express. But hearing that the report from Mr. Tillam was [gone out] to the world, which we judged might bring dishonour to truth, and upon that account seeing our brother's spirit under much sadness, for the removing of both we wrote to him and you in love. And that we had a ground to believe that he [had] read and reported the letter to the world (and to more than Mr. Liddle of Ravensworth), though he affirmed the contrary to our wonderment, we think good therefore to give you two or three [reasons] to begin with to examine, wherein you and he may see that we had grounds for what we wrote, though he is pleased to say, there was neither religion nor reason in it. He at one time declared it to Thomas Gibson and Crane Liddill, both of Hexham; Edward Rowland standing by heard it. The same we hear he did to Mrs. Fenwick.

Whereas he did demand of us a rule for admonishing our brother Hobson before he informed us, we think he had the same rule, and it was as orderly for him so far to own him, as to desire him to preach to the church at Hexham. We judge it far more suitable to a rule for him to have reproved him for sin, than to have procured him to perform such a duty amongst you. And upon that account we had just cause so to [write] to him; which, if seriously considered by you and him, we hope there is no such cause for him to spread it before the Lord as an injury from us, as he expresses in his letter to do. The Lord grant that he and you may not use such expressions in bare imitations, but with fear, spirit, and power, having those weighty grounds as they had which used those expressions; knowing the Lord will not be mocked, though men may be deceived. And whereas Mr. Tillam saith, he expected rather an answer to his answer of our articles, which was to wonderment assigned by you all,

we hope our last letter hath given you some account. But if the staying to have it decided by the church at London will not satisfy you, we are willing to give an answer to you, and to all the churches in the world, of the insufficiency of the answer to our articles. In which we hope we shall appear not with such ungospel-like spirits as he accuseth us of, nor appear an enemy to him; unless it be as Paul was to the Galatians, for telling of them the truth. And whereas he accuseth us for endeavouring to make divisions among you, and not appearing willing to become one with him and you: the Lord knows our hearts, that we own him and you so far as you own the truth. And nothing hinders us from being in all things one with you, but our great sense of your evil in owning the unrighteous wages of Balaam, and such things that our [Lord Jesus] Christ, in the rules of his church, doth not own.

This is that, and no other thing in us, that keeps us from closing with you. And whether this will be a ground of reproof to us, or commendation, in that great day of the Lord, we leave with any heart that is acquainted with God to judge. So, desiring the Lord to clear up the cause of differences betwixt you and us, and to give you and us hearts that we may use no expressions, nor perform no actions, but as in the sight of God, and warrantable to his word—which is that alone, and not the approbation of creatures, that we are to stand by in the great day of Christ—so leaving him and you, not as despised worms, but as those whom we can in sincerity say we love in Christ, and so desire to remain:

THO. GOWER, LEWIS FFROST,
MICHAEL PARKER, JOHN CARRUTH,
JAMES TURNER, ROBERT BLENKINSOPP.

GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE.

CONTAINING

1.—GOD'S RECONCILIATION TO MAN.

2.—MAN'S RECONCILIATION TO GOD.

BY

HENRY DENNE,

AN UNWORTHY SERVANT OF THE CHURCH.

Not by arms, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.—*Zach.* iv. 5.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CITY OF ROCHESTER.

A PRAYER.

O Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast given commandment unto thy apostles and ministers to preach the gospel to every creature; behold, O Lord, the oppositions and threatenings which the enemies of thy grace have breathed forth against thy truth, and thy servants for thy truth's sake. How they gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven, not repenting them of their deeds. Behold the troops that are assembled together against the Lord, and against his anointed Son, Jesus Christ; for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel hath determined before to be done. Now let the Lord grant unto his servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, being nothing terrified by the adversary: that the light of the grace of God may shine in the hearts of his people; that the man of sin and son of perdition may be destroyed by the brightness of thy coming. Amen.

RECONCILIATION OF GOD TO MAN.

PREACHING PEACE BY JESUS CHRIST.—Acts x. 36.

It was our Saviour's commandment unto his apostles, Luke x., *Into whatsoever city ye come, say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* v. 9. *And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be unto this house. And if the son of peace be there your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.* v. 5, 6. I am this day, by the providence of the Almighty, come a stranger to your city. And now, what fitter subject can I think of for a stranger to speak unto strangers, than the glad tidings of peace by Jesus Christ?

Cornelius, the centurion, with his kinsmen and near friends are the auditors, Peter is the preacher; and this text a part of that sermon at the preaching whereof the *Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.* v. 44. O that the Lord would vouchsafe that the like effect may this day follow the preaching of the word of this life, that as many as hear me this day may go away filled with the fulness of God. Peter doth seem to say in effect thus much: you are here met together to attend unto the word of salvation, delivered from my mouth. I can preach to you no other gospel than that which was before by the prophets declared unto the children of Israel, in due time to be revealed, that is to say, peace by Jesus Christ—he is the Lord of all.

The proposition from these words is, that the gospel is a doctrine of peace by Jesus Christ.

This doctrine propounded, needeth not so much proof as explication, namely, to show unto you what manner of peace this is which is holden forth unto you by the tender of the glorious gospel. I hope you do not expect that I should this day declare unto you any outward, temporal, or worldly peace; in the midst of these distempers I would I might, and be yet a true prophet. The peace which is the subject of the gospel, is like the kingdom of Christ (being, indeed, a part of it), *not of this world.* John xviii. 36. The peace which came by Jesus Christ is not an earthly peace; our blessed Saviour will not that you should entertain or harbour such a thought as this. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I am come to set the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.* Matt. x. 34. If any one, then, shall preach unto you, that if you will embrace the gospel you shall have outward peace and prosperity: is not this—the gospel [that] you shall have outward peace and prosperity—is not this the prophet prophesying in his own name, whom the Lord hath not sent? If any Christian shall embrace the gospel in hope to attain outward felicity and prosperity, let me tell him his thoughts wander from the truth, and he erreth, not knowing the Scriptures; *For if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* Matt. xvi. 24. *And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.* 2 Tim. iii. 12. Hear we, also, what Paul saith, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, *In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one* (that is in all 195 stripes). *Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in*

perils in the sea, in perils amongst false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. What a catalogue of evils, what an inventory of afflictions have we here? And yet all this and more is the portion of a laborious apostle. And if we will seek for a true and sincere minister of the gospel, we shall as soon find him in poverty and nakedness as jetting up and down the streets with attendants at his heels; we shall as soon find him in the university of Newgate, or some other prison, as in great men's houses; we shall as soon find him in a cloud of reproach, as in a fat benefice or cathedral dignity; we shall as soon find him at the bar accused of heresy, condemned for blasphemy, as in the courts of kings or princes; for to the instruction and consolation of the people of God be it spoken, *They shall put you out of their synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.* John xvi. 2. Seeing, then, that is clear that it is no worldly peace, it remaineth yet to show you what peace this is which the gospel preacheth. It is not an external peace, but it is internal, yea eternal. It is a lasting, yea an everlasting peace; a peace which no tongue is sufficient to express, nor heart to conceive; it is even *The love of Christ that passeth knowledge.* Eph. ii. 19. It is even the peace of God which passeth all, yea, angelical understanding. If some great and mighty angel should undertake to declare this peace to you, I am confident he would confess his abilities too weak: how much more I, that am but dust and ashes? Surely, when I shall have told you all that I am able, I shall not tell you one-hundredth part; and when you shall understand and believe all that you are able, you shall not attain unto the least part of that glory which shall hereafter be revealed. Though I am not able to speak what you desire, or the thing itself deserveth, yet I will endeavour to speak what I am able. And I shall commend unto you a

two-fold peace: the first, descending; the second, ascending. The first, is the tidings of the love and reconciliation of the ever-living God unto the sons of men.

The second, declares the reconciliation of the sons of men to the ever-living and ever-loving God.

To speak plain; first, I will show how God comes to be reconciled unto men. Bear with the term "reconciled," although improperly spoken of Him that was never an enemy.

Secondly, I will show you how we come to be reconciled unto God.

For the first, How doth God come to be reconciled to men?

I conceive now the drooping conscience that sits in darkness under the cloudy apprehension of an angry judge, under the fearful expectation of a terrible account, to be given unto the consuming fire, will be very attentive to hear that which his heart so thirsteth after—how God may be reconciled. Oh, what shall I do, saith the soul, to obtain the favour of God? What shall I do to turn away his wrathful displeasure from me? wherewith shall I come before him? or how shall I appease him? Attend, therefore, and I shall declare that which thou wilt hardly believe when it is told unto thee. For, *Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Isa. liii. 1. And yet that which I shall declare, if thou canst believe it, will *fill thy mouth with laughter, and thy tongue with singing.* Psal. cxxvi. 2. Take this proposition:—God is freely and fully reconciled to the elect, and loveth them in Jesus Christ without any previous dispositions, without any qualifications, without any performances or conditions on their parts, unless to be polluted and sinful be a previous condition or qualification. This is a bold proposition, will the pharisee say; this is too good news to be true, will the distressed soul say. But I say, the Lord break your stony hearts, and give you an heart of flesh, that

you may submit to his righteousness. And I make no question but the glorious grace of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall abundantly be manifested. The method I intend is, 1. To prove the truth of this proposition; 2. To answer six objections; 3. To make application.

1. For the proof.—When Eve and Adam (in whose loins we all sinned) had eaten the forbidden fruit, and were now become guilty of condemnation, they hear the voice of God walking in the garden, which voice was this: "Thou hast eaten, and thou shalt die." They hide themselves from the presence of God, amongst the trees of the garden, when man had sinned and was in a despairing condition, having not so much wit as to think of a Saviour, much less the boldness to ask one at the hands of an offended God.

Now, in this case, behold the exceeding love of God towards man, in giving and manifesting the promised seed, as well to the terror of Satan as to the consolation of mankind. And *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Gen. iii. 15. See (if I may compare the Creator with the creature) how the Lord's bowels do yearn upon man. And he cannot refrain himself, but that (lest man should have been swallowed up with sorrow) the blessing of the promised seed shall be first declared, before the Lord pronounce the least curse against man. Father Abraham receiveth the promise in the uncircumcision of his flesh, and unto Adam is the promise revealed in the uncircumcision of his heart. But, lest you should think that some qualification in Adam did forerun the manifestation of the promise, I will refer you unto that place of Scripture which, I am resolved, shall never slip out of my remembrance, and I hope the like of you. 2 Tim. i. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus*

before the world began. What is there that is not comprehended in this word, grace? Here you see that grace was given before the world began. Now, what conditions or qualifications were there in us before the world began? We may safely, therefore, say that the grace of our God was before all conditions, &c. Unto this we will add, in the next place, one text, that like a diamond casteth his lustre in the dark, and ministereth a great measure of the Spirit. Eph. ii. 4, 5. *God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved).* What if I shall now prove so bold as to make such a stop at sins, as shall show that that part of the sentence is referred to that which went before; so that we may say in plain terms, that 'God loved us with his great love, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.' If I shall read it thus, the text will bear it either in the original or in other translations. But if any froward person shall say that I do injury in reading it thus, and that this clause, "dead in trespasses and sins,' ought rather to be referred to quickened, which follows after, than to the verb "loved," which goeth before, let this man know that the sense will be one and the same: for when God quickened us, then he loved us with his great love, his love being the cause of quickening the effect of his love. But thou sayest we were quickened when we were dead in trespasses and sins; therefore we conclude we were loved with his great love when we were dead in trespasses and sins. For further confirmation, I must entreat you to consider what is written by the apostle, Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13, *For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* Now you see God's love set upon

Jacob. Where were Jacob's qualifications? he had neither done good nor evil: therefore it is plain that God loved him before any qualification. But some may confess that the Lord loved him, indeed, before he had done good or evil, and yet may, perchance, ask a question upon a supposition, saying; Suppose that after Jacob was born he should have led a wicked and perverse life; suppose that, for some years, he should have been a notorious and profane person, would or could the Lord have continued his love to such a person as this? I answer boldly, yes; for God's love and mercy are mercies of eternity. *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him*; Psal. ciii. 17; not only to everlasting, as eternal in respect to time to come, but also from everlasting, as eternal in respect of that which is past. God's mercies are not only without beginning, but also without ending, as it is so often repeated, even twenty-six times, Psal. cxxxvi., *His mercy endureth for ever.* This is it that is written by the prophet, *I, the Lord, I change not, therefore the sons of men are not consumed.* Mal. iii. 6. Would you know the true reason why the sons of Jacob are not consumed? it is this: *I change not.* Should the Lord change as often as we change; should his love increase and decrease towards us, as often as our love to him and obedience to his majesty ebbeth and floweth, the Lord should be more variable than the wind, more changeable than the moon. That the Lord's love altereth not, although it hath been sufficiently proved by that which hath been spoken, yet, to the praise of the glory of his grace, I will proceed to show you, by more testimonies, that the Lord loveth all his elect with his great love, even then, when as they lie weltering in their sins and transgressions. Unto this the Holy Ghost bears witness, Rom. v. 5; *When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* For whom Christ died, them the Father and the Son loved; but Christ died for the ungodly

that were without strength, therefore such were undoubtedly beloved of God. Lest we should think the first of these propositions to be weak, it is confirmed, verse 8, *God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* And very worthy of observation is that which is spoken, verse 10; *When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* Here we have more proved than I have yet undertaken; for my task is to prove that God was reconciled to us whilst we were enemies. This text saith not only so, but that we were reconciled to God when we were enemies. But of this more shall be spoken hereafter; only for the present we desire to have it granted, that when we were reconciled to God he was, without all doubt, reconciled to us. For our reconciliation to him is not the cause of his reconciliation to us; but contrary, his reconciliation to us is the cause of our reconciliation to him. Now let us see the argument once again: for whom Christ died these he loved; but Christ died for ungodly, for sinners, for enemies; therefore he loved enemies, sinners, ungodly, and with such a love as is not only verbal but real, not in word but in deed and in truth, as doth already appear by his death and will; yet more plainly appear those acts of love, communicated unto us, even when we were in the state of ungodliness, in the worst estate and condition. Let us consider that place so full of the glory of God, which is written, Ezek. xvi. verses 2, 3, unto the 15th verse, *Thou wast cast out in the open field to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee in thy blood, yea, I said unto thee in thy blood, Live.* Why doth the Lord use this ingemination, "in thy blood, in thy blood?" Is it not because he knoweth how hardly we are drawn to believe the glory of his grace, and how ready we are to rob him of the honour of his infinite mercy? The Lord doth as it were say: I know you will

wonder at this, that I should say live, before you were washed, salted, or swaddled, while you were in your blood. But I remember the act of my grace which passed upon you even in blood. The Lord loved us not because we were washed and cleansed, but therefore he washed and cleansed us, because he loved us. See the freeness of God's love, *God so loved thew orld, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16. This place is well known unto you, it may be here lies hid something, which many of you never discovered, namely that Christ given is the effect of God's love, not the cause. And that the love of God goes before the gift of his Son as the cause goeth before the effect. He therefore gave his son because he loved.

If this seem strange, that God's love should be more ancient in order of causes than the gift of his Son, because that in him God doth communicate all things unto us, I answer, that *Christ is God manifested to us in the flesh.* 1 Tim. iii. 16. And that all the blessings of that love, wherewith the Lord loved us eternally, are manifested only in Christ Jesus. And in him they are fully manifested to have been for ever in the bosom of the Father. So that for us to say or think, that Christ purchased the love of the Father for us, is that which I am confident the Redeemer of the world will not challenge unto himself, but say, (as in another case) It is not mine to give, but it was given to them, to whom it was given before the foundation of the world was laid. This is all that I am able to speak, unless it should be lawful for me, in so reverend a mystery, to use a distinction, and to consider in the love of God the original of his love, and the continuation thereof, and to say that the original of his love was before the gift of his Son, as the cause before the effect; but that the continuation of love is to be referred unto the propitiation of the Redeemer, as the effect

of that sacrifice which he offered. To speak plain, God's love was before the gift of his Son, as the cause before the effect. But the continuation of that love, that he should love us for ever, requires a foregoing propitiation and satisfaction. But when we shall say thus, we fall into a depth unsearchable. When we shall ask why the continuation of his love should rather require a foregoing propitiation, than the original setting of his love upon us? I confess I cannot tell what to say for to clear this; but tremble to speak of this glorious mystery, and desire to refer myself to the judgment of the spiritual, who are able to judge all things and to be instructed by them, whether it be not safer to rest in that which was said before, than, with subtilty of distinctions, to wade into the depth unsearchable. We see the great love of God to us in our blood, how that he so loved us, that he gave us his Son. I will now be bold to step a step higher, if higher may be, and to show you that God did not only love us in our blood with his great love; but that his love to us in our blood was as great as ever afterwards. He loved us, I say, with as great love when we were in blood and pollution, as he did afterward when we were cleansed. I know the Pharisee will stamp at this, and say, Doth God love as well before conversion as after conversion? Did God love Paul with as great a love when that he persecuted the church, as when he preached the gospel? I will answer boldly: Yea, he did; and that I shall by the assistance of God prove unto you, against men or devils who shall oppose it. That God loved us, being dead in trespasses and sins, you have heard proved. Now give me leave to propound a question:—whether this great love wherewith God loved sinners, be not his infinite love, like himself? nay, whether is it in any other thing than himself? *God is love.* 1 John iv. 16. If this be granted, that God's love is infinite to sinners; that it is, like himself, yea, that it is himself—for love in

God is not a quality — then it will be plain, that his love is not capable of increase or decrease, but is always one and the same. The difference is in us, whose apprehensions do often increase and decrease. Again, is not the love of God to be weighed by the pledges of his love? But we shall find the greatest pledges of his love to be given unto sinners even in the state of ungodliness. What greater pledge than the gift of his Son? *In this God commendeth his love, &c.*, as before. Rom. v. 8. All the mercies of God are commendations of his love, but none like this. All other gifts are not comparable to the gift of his Son. *He that spareth not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. If all things were laid in one balance, and the Son of God in the other, no man doubteth but that the Son of God would be infinitely beyond all things. *Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend.* John xv. 13. But greater love hath God, in that he laid down his life for his enemies. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* 1 John iv. 9, 10. Now that the apostle saith, *In this was manifested the love of God:* and, *Herein is love:*—he doth it to this end, that he might show unto us that Christ was the greatest manifestation of God's love; *Hereby perceive we the love of God, that he hath laid down his life for us.* 1 John iii. 16. These speeches are all comparative, showing us that God's love was manifest in nothing more, or rather nothing so much, as in the death of his Son. Abraham's love to God appeared in many things; but above all, in that he denied not his son. *For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.* Gen. xxii. 12. May not we

justly say with admiration unto God, Now we know that thou lovest us, because thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son? Thus you see God doth not only love us before conversion, but he loveth us with his great love, yea his greatest love that ever was communicated to the creature; for greater love did God never manifest to the creature, than that he should give his Son. This may more fully appear by several effects of the love of God, communicated unto men by God, in and through his Son, before conversion, faith, &c., or any thing in us pre-considered. *He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.* Eph. i. 4. Again, *He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of sons, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,* verses 5, 6, 7. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,* verse 11. How many acts of God have we here communicated by his grace unto the creature, before repentance, faith, or conversion, or calling! We will add to these one act of grace more, communicated to the creature in the state of ungodliness; *God justifieth the ungodly.* Rom. iv. 5. Yea, take we sanctification in the common acceptation, may we not say God sanctifieth the ungodly? For men are not sanctified, because they are godly; but [are] godly, because they are sanctified. Yea, one thing more, even calling itself, effectual calling I mean, goes before conversion, as the cause before the effect; for calling is not an effect of conversion, but conversion is an effect of calling. It is necessary that God call before we can hear; yea, that God open the heart before we can receive. If I did think that these things needed proof, I would spend time about it. You see now predestination, choosing,

redemption, justification, sanctification, calling, opening of the heart, all of them gracious acts of God, communicated unto the creature before the conversion of the creature to God. Let us hear the Lord speaking of his own work upon the creature, Isa. lvii. 18, *He went on frowardly in the way of his heart; I have seen his ways and will heal him, I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners.* Whom wilt thou heal? O Lord, whom wilt thou restore? Even him whose ways I have seen. What are those ways? Even frowardness and perverseness. *He went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* See again, Isa. xliii. 25, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* Whose sins will the Lord blot out? Look we back unto the 22nd verse, *Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel; thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities,* verse 24. See, thou hast been weary of me; yea, thou hast wearied me. This is Jacob's qualification; this is Israel's preparation. Then follows, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.* As if the Lord would say unto his people, as he speaketh by the prophet, Ezek. xxxvi, 22, *Say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went;* or as when Israel was near the confines of Canaan the Lord speaketh thus unto them by Moses, *Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people.* Deut. ix. 6. As if the Lord should say, I will blot out your transgressions. But I would have you know the riches of my grace. It is not anything in you that moveth me unto it. For there is nothing in you but rebellion; but I do it for my glory's sake. As the prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, Isa. xlviii. 8, 9, *I knew*

that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb: for my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. This is all the qualification we bring unto God, to win his love and mercy. We are rebellious, we are profane, we are a stiff-necked people. And if the Lord should not love us, until he find lovely conditions in us, surely he must hate us for ever. If God should not be reconciled unto us, until we be reconciled unto him, he must continue our enemy for ever. Wherefore, considering what hath been said, we will be bold to conclude to the praise of the glory of his grace, that his love and mercy to us is before all qualifications in us; that his love and mercy to us is the cause of all qualifications in us; that his love towards us is as great before faith and conversion as after. There is no difference in him. But some will say, Peradventure we grant that God thus loveth us, as is before proved; but it may be it was because he foresaw we would be good, repent, believe, &c. Far be it from us to entertain such thoughts. He that well pondereth what hath been said, shall well perceive, that God doth not therefore love us, because he foresaw we will repent and believe, but therefore causeth us to repent and believe in his time, because he loveth us.

But to make this also more clear, the Holy Ghost declares, That the kindness of God towards man, *appeared not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.* Tit. iii. 4, 5. The pattern according to which God setteth his love upon man, was not anything save his rich mercy; whereby it is plain, *Not that we loved him, but that he loved us.* 1 John iv. 10. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* John xv. 16. As our father Abraham received the righteousness of faith being yet uncircumcised, and then received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised:

so, as Abraham was first righteous and then circumcised, not first circumcised and then righteous, so the children of Abraham are first beloved and then converted, not first converted and then beloved. And as God did not account Abraham righteous, because he foresaw he would be circumcised, but therefore he gave him the sign of circumcision, because he had made him righteous; so it is with the children of Abraham, God doth not therefore love them, because he foreseeth they will repent and believe, but therefore he causeth them in his time to repent and believe the gospel, because he loved them. Thus have I done with the first thing propounded in the handling of this proposition. The second follows, namely the answer unto the several objections. The first and greatest is this: If God love the elect while they are yet dead in trespasses and sins, and so love them with his great love, and with as great a love before conversion as after, as is before proved, then how is it said, Psal. v. 5, *Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity?*

And hither we may refer many places of scripture of like nature. If God hate all the workers of iniquity, how can he be said to love the ungodly? Thus you see, in one short sentence, seemeth to be quite overthrown all that I have hitherto spoken. To wind out of this labyrinth, which some having essayed have further entangled themselves (with invocation unto God for the wisdom of his holy Spirit to guide us into the truth), I will first show what some have said to clear this, and then shall deliver unto you mine own judgment; and yet, I hope, not mine own, but the judgment of the Spirit of God and of most of the saints of God. First, then, I find a great cathedral doctor (moving the objection and labouring to give solution) to give us this distinction, that God hates the works but not the persons of his elect. I will not stand to question, whether there may be such a distinction admitted or no, but will take it for

granted; and yet I do believe sin to be of that hideous nature, and the justice of God so perfect, that he cannot but hate the person unto whom he imputeth and upon whom he chargeth sin, if so be the person charged cannot give full, perfect, and present satisfaction. And yet will I not say that the Son of God, upon whom all our iniquities, great and small, were charged, was as at any time, *Filius odii*, a son of hatred (for the Father was eternally well pleased with him); the reason is, that our sins were no sooner charged upon him, but that he had given full and perfect satisfaction, being *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Rev. xiii. 8. Although the foresaid distinction of person and works should be granted without further question, yet give me leave to pronounce it nothing pertinent to the solution of the objection in hand. For the text saith, not only he hateth the works, but the workers (that is, the persons working iniquity). Another answer is brought to untie this knot, by a jingling distinction of a two-fold love in God, namely, *amor benevolentiæ*, and *amor complacentiæ;* that the simple may understand there is in God, say they, a love of well-willing, and a love of liking. Now God (say they) loves his elect before their conversion, with the love of well-willing, but not with the love of liking. Like unto which we hear of a distinction not seldom, of the love of election, and the love of justification. God (say they) loves his elect with the love of election, but not with the love of justification. First of all, I desire you to consider, whether there be not more rhyme than reason in these distinctions; the love of election, and the love of justification, being not diversities of love, or divers degrees of love, but divers manifestations of one and the same infinite love. As when a father hath conveyed an inheritance to his son, there is no new love from the father to the son, but a new manifestation of that love, wherewith the father loved the son before. Secondly, how can it be that

God should not like the person whom he loves? There is indeed this difference between human love and divine; men commonly love because they like; but God likes because he loves. Man cannot but love where he likes. And I believe (speaking of the person) God cannot but like where he loves. To make such differences of love in God will, I fear, open a gap to many foul absurdities. But suppose that these things could be so, it will appear that God loves the persons of his elect, not only with a love of benevolence but also with a love of complacence and liking: for this is the voice of the Father from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Matt. iii. 17. Here is a revelation of the love of liking, *I am well pleased.* The Father is well pleased in his Son. With whom? Surely with those unto whom he had given his Son, that is, all his elect. Again, this answer, if it were beyond all exceptions, yet it is very impertinent to the objection: for the text doth not only say, that God loveth them not with such or such a love, but in plain terms it saith that the Lord hateth them that work iniquity. Now what shall we say: that God loves a person with infinite love, beyond expression or conceit, and yet at the same time hateth the same person with that perfect hatred wherewith he hateth all the workers of iniquity? Let us take heed that we draw not a veil before the face of God, and delude ourselves and others with such frothy and impertinent distinctions. But I have by this time bred a kind of wonder in you, what I shall speak: seeing that which other men have said, thus far liketh me not. I answer therefore, that this clause, God hateth all the workers of iniquity, and God loveth the ungodly, are both in scripture, and therefore both true; yet in a different sense. The first, the Lord hateth all the workers of iniquity, is the voice of the law: the other, the Lord loves sinners, is the voice of the gospel. Now the law and the gospel speak divers

things. The one, being the manifestation of God's justice, tells us what we are by nature: the other, being the manifestation of God's mercy, tells us what we are by grace in Jesus Christ. The law saith, that every sinner shall be accursed. The gospel saith, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The law saith, *God will by no means clear the guilty.* Exod. xxxiv. 7. The gospel saith, God justifieth the ungodly. The law declareth wrath without forgiveness: the gospel, mercy, grace, and peace in Jesus Christ. Thus far is the objection answered; but yet all difficulty and scruple is not removed: for the law, you will say, is an eternal verity, whatsoever it saith is true. I confess it so, and one jot or tittle thereof cannot fail. But I say, with the apostle, that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them only who are under the law, and to none other. I say again, *that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled by Christ for us all; yea in all that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 4. So that although the elect of God are sinners in the judgment of the law, sense, reason, yea and oftentimes conscience; yet having their sins translated unto the Son of God, (in whom they were elected) they have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in the Mediator, and so become to be accounted righteous in his sight; that as God on the one side delivered the innocent to death, as though he had been a sinner, being made accountable for our sins; so on the other side, God loveth, justifieth, cleareth the guilty and sinners, as if they had been holy, righteous, and blameless. The sum is this, that as Christ was no sinner indeed, and yet a sinner by imputation; so they that are Christ's are no sinners by imputation, and yet sinners indeed.

Thus much for the first objection. The second follows:—

Objection 2.—If God be reconciled unto us, before all conditions, &c., how is it that our Saviour saith, Matt. vi. 15, *If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly*

Father forgive you your trespasses. Unto which may be joined that which we have, Matt. xviii. 35, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* In which place we see, first, that unless we forgive, God will not forgive us; nay more, that God will reverse the act of his mercy, if after he hath forgiven us ten thousand talents, we shall not forgive one hundred pence; we shall be delivered to the tormentors, until we pay the whole due. For answer to this objection, we must lay down two grounds; the first, that God never reverseth the acts of his mercy communicated to his elect. *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* Rom. xi. 2, 9. *God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.* 1 Sam. xxiii. 19. The second ground, that God's forgiveness of us is a forerunner of our forgiveness of our brethren. And we cannot truly forgive our brethren, until we do apprehend God's forgiveness of us. *Shouldest not thou have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Matt. xviii. 33. And upon this ground the apostle presseth the Ephesians unto kindness and tenderness of heart, *forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* Eph. iv. 3.

But then if this be so, what mean the foresaid places, which strengthen the objection? I answer; that forgiveness is there to be taken for the manifestation of forgiveness: except ye forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father so fully declare and manifest himself unto your consciences. And so this place pertaineth properly to our reconciliation with God, not unto God's reconciliation with us. That this is not a subtle evasion, but the truth, appears first by a place of scripture; secondly, by the judgment of interpreters upon a like place. The place of scripture is found, Luke vii. 47, *Her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much.* What have we here? that this woman's great love was the

cause of remission, or that it went before her obtaining of remission, as Bellarmine contendeth? Verily no: but it is plain, that her remission obtained was the cause of her love. Simon, saith our Saviour, a certain creditor forgave two debtors frankly: whereof the one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty; which of the twain will love him most? Simon answereth well, He to whom he forgave the most. Our Saviour maketh the application; Seest thou this woman? Thou lovest me a little, thou hast bidden me to dinner. But when I came into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Thou seest, that I have forgiven thee a few sins, and thou lovest me a little, but this woman hath much forgiven her: therefore she loved much, Whereby we understand two things; first, that her love was not the cause of forgiveness, but forgiveness the cause of her love. Secondly, that forgiveness in this place includeth the manifestation of forgiveness: many sins are forgiven her. The sense is this: it appeareth unto this woman that I have pardoned a multitude of sins for her. This is the scripture.

The judgment of interpreters in the protestant church, upon a like place, is occasioned by an argument urged by Cardinal Bellarmine and other popelings, against the protestants, on this wise. If, saith he, the protestants have pardon of all their sins, in such wise as they say they have, why do they yet pray, *Forgive us our trespasses*, if they be already forgiven? The protestants answer with one consent, that they do beg at the hands of God greater certainty, and assurance of his grace towards them: the petition, *Forgive us our trespasses*, may well stand with assurance of pardon. The condemned person that is upon the ladder, having received the pardon of a gracious prince, hears it read; is

assured of it, and rejoiceth in it; yet this person being called into the presence of the king, if he should fall down and say, Pardon me, my lord the king; who could lay folly to his charge? So we, having received the free pardon of sin at his hand already, yet as oft as we come into his presence we cry to the glory of his grace, *Forgive us our trespasses:* for while we beg at the hands of God, that which we have before received, we do magnify his grace, that hath freely given it. Again, who so sure and certain of pardon, but that he either needeth a greater assurance, or at least, that assurance to be by God's mercy continued. Thus much for the second objection. The third followeth.

If God love us in blood and pollution, as well before conversion as after conversion, then to what purpose serve our faith and good works? First, I answer this objection indirectly, by propounding one question; whether thou thinkest that thy faith and good works can obtain or procure the love and favour of God? If thou sayest no, then why dost thou make this objection? If thou sayest yea, then I demand, who shall give thee faith and good works? Shouldst thou expect them from any other than from the hand of a loving God? Secondly, I answer directly, by showing thee the true office of faith. Although faith do not procure God's love and favour, yet is it to very good purpose, and exceeding precious; that you may know the love of God, and be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. *In whom after ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* Eph. i. 13, 14. The original reads it, In whom believing ye were sealed: so that believing is sealing, and an earnest of the inheritance. Secondly, that believing, you who were under darkness, and in the shadow of death, and saw no light, yea, I say, *believing ye might rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith.*

1 Pet. i. 8; Rom. xv. 13. *The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.*

Thus you see your faith is to very good purpose, and yet not to that purpose, to obtain the love and favour of God. Thus much for the office of faith; yet do I not undertake to set out unto you the whole office of that most precious gift, but only so much as may serve to answer the present objection. But secondly, to what purpose serve our good works? I answer, to very good purpose also; namely, to express our thankfulness to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath delivered us from our enemies, *That we being delivered might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.* Luke i. 74, 75. We do not serve God to obtain deliverance by serving of him; but of his free grace obtaining deliverance we serve him. We do not serve God to obtain salvation; but, obtaining salvation freely by Jesus Christ, we offer up our souls and bodies, a living sacrifice of thanksgiving. I answer further, thy good works may be *profitable unto men*, Tim. iii. 8; but not unto God, who is of absolute perfection, and needeth not any thing which thou canst do. *Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it any gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?* Job xxii. 2, 3. Thus you see the office of your faith and works. Because we say that God loves us as well before conversion as after, do we therefore make faith and works void? God forbid. Must I need put out my fire, because I will not set it on the top of the house? No, I will keep it within the chimney, which is the proper place. Woe be to that city, where the fire shall overtop the houses: fire is precious in the chimney, but dangerous elsewhere. Precious is the gift of faith, if kept within its own sphere; but if we shall begin to lift it up, and place it in the throne of Christ, what rock more dangerous

to the soul? The brazen serpent was a great blessing so long as Israel looked at it by God's appointment, to be healed of the biting of the fiery serpents. But when once Israel shall burn incense unto it, let it be Nehushtan, a piece of old cankered brass. 2 Kings xviii. 4. Thus for the third objection; the fourth followeth.

If God love us with as great a love before conversion as after, then what need we take care what we do? If we repent and believe, the Lord will love us never the better; if we neither repent nor believe, the Lord will love us never the worse. Answer: I can hardly vouchsafe to give an answer to this objection; because the wise man adviseth, Prov. xxvi. 4, *Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like unto him.* And yet I must give an answer, because the wise man commandeth, verse 5, *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit,* lest if I should pass by this objection thou shouldst triumph as if thou hadst gotten the victory. I answer, therefore, with the apostle, *Shall we sin that grace may abound, and shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.* Rom. vi. 15. This objection was moved by cavilling spirits, even in the apostle's time, well nigh 1600 years ago, and you see the answer. And now the same spirit rageth in thee. But I thought what a customer we should have of thee. Thou wouldst make men believe that thou art no justiciary, no papist, not one that seeks to be justified by thy works; and yet if thy works cannot obtain God's favour, if they cannot procure an increase of his love, thou will presently cast off all and give liberty to thy flesh. Give me leave to speak plain: *Thou art he that turnest the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into wantonness, whose end is destruction, whose god is thy belly, whose glory is thy shame, who mindest earthly things.* Philip. iii. 19. But be it known unto thee, that the grace of God teacheth other things; namely, to deny all ungodliness

and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

But I perceive by this objection, that thou accountest this a doctrine of liberty, to declare the free love of God in Jesus Christ; and thou thinkest it were better to hide this from the people, and to terrify them with hell fire, with wrath, and judgment, and with the fiery flashings of Mount Sinai, and to keep them in bondage. I can hardly refrain from giving thee very evil language, that art thus presumptuous and audacious to contradict the Lord Jesus, who hath given commandment that the gospel of peace should be preached to all nations. I will spare to speak what I think, and commend unto thy consideration the judgment of one of our own countrymen, whose learning was by his adversaries commended, whose constancy and patience in his martyrdom was admired; it was John Fryth, who writeth to this effect:— Thou mayest preach hell and damnation, and the rendering of a terrible account to a severe judge, &c., seven years together, and yet not make one good Christian man. He that would make a good Christian, let the love of God be the first stone which he layeth for the foundation. Thus he speaketh. And, indeed, what motive to obedience so strong as love? *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.* Cant. viii. 7. What greater fear than that which proceedeth from love? If we have an enemy whom we hate we sheathe a sword in his bowels, or cleave his head with a pole-axe, and cry him no mercy; but how careful are we not to do the least injury to a friend? If we tread on his finger we are sorry at the heart. What greater aggravation of sin than to sin against love. Were not he an ungracious and rebellious son amongst men, who should reason thus: I have an indulgent father who loveth me exceedingly, deemeth nothing too good for me, who hath given me assurance and possession of his whole inheritance, therefore I will

surely neglect him, I will show myself undutiful against him, I will no more regard his commands or attend unto his precepts, but whatsoever will grieve him that will I do. What heart could not afford to cast a stone at the head of such a son of Belial as this—to dash out his brains? For shame: let the mover of this objection blush and hide his head; let him consider his folly. The case is thine; thou art the man: because God aboundeth in free love, mercy, and kindness, therefore thou wilt abound in wretchedness. I cease to speak any farther of this to thy greater shame. The fifth objection follows, which is indeed more mannerly than the former.

Objection 5.—If God love us, be reconciled unto us, before our faith and our conversion, then a man may possibly die without faith and yet be saved.

I answer, this followeth not; because God hath engaged himself to the contrary, which if he had not done, much might have been said. But we see, he that cannot lie hath engaged himself unto his people. *I will put my law into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.* Heb. x. 6. *And all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.* Heb. viii. 11. *All thy children shall be taught of God.* John vi. 54; Isa. liv. 13. So that we say, he that believeth not shall be damned; not because his believing doth alter or change his estate before God, but because the God of truth hath promised that he will not only give us remission, but that he will also give faith for our consolation; and so faith becometh a note and mark of life everlasting, and final infidelity a sure note of eternal condemnation: that whosoever or whatsoever he be in life or conversation, yet he that believeth not shall be damned. Thus much for the fifth.

Objection 6.—The sixth objection: If God love us as you say, why doth he suffer us to live in sin ten, fifty, or sixty years?

I answer, What art thou that repliest against God? *How*

unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. Rom. xi. 33. Again, let us ask Paul why the Lord suffered him (being an elect and chosen vessel) to persecute his saints unto death and bonds, and to cause many to blaspheme; and he will tell us, *That in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* 1 Tim. i. 16. Thirdly; thou mayest as well object, seeing that God is of infinite power, why doth he suffer sin in the world? If thou shouldst, the Lord will give answer, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* 2 Cor. xii. 9. Thus far for the objections; now we come to the third thing propounded—the application of what hath been spoken.

Application 1.—In the first place, we will observe the difference between the true religion and the false, from that which hath been spoken. There are many religions in the world; and it fareth with diversities of religions as with diversities of opinions: there is a possibility that they may be all false, but it is altogether impossible that they should be all true. There is but one true religion, but there are many false; the false religions seeming to differ exceedingly amongst themselves, in very many things, even in the object of worship, and in the matter and manner; yet be they never so different there is one common foundation wherein they do all agree, and wherein they differ from the true. The true religion propoundeth unto us a God in Christ reconciled, pacified, pleased, a justice already satisfied, a propitiation made, sins taken away; and we have not one jot, not one apex, in all the new covenant to be found of reconciling God to us, but of our reconciliation to God. The new covenant manifesteth unto us a God already reconciled to us; and the whole ministry of reconciliation propoundeth our reconciliation to God. Now this is the common character of all false religions, of what sort soever. Jews, Turks, papists, pharisaical protestants, heathen, all propound in some degree

or other an angry God, a deity not reconciled, and then prescribe certain means and services whereby to appease his wrath and to quench his displeasure, and to obtain his love and favour. Man doth not oftener seek after salvation, but he naturally stumbleth upon this principle, What shall I do to be saved? The world would be saved by doing. Martin Luther, speaking of this difference, doth more than once compare the false religions unto Sampson's foxes, Jud. xv. 4, *Their heads looking divers ways, but they were fastened together by the tails.* This comparison we do embrace; yet I had rather compare them to gentlemen's spaniels, which are fastened together by the necks, but loose at the tails. They differ, indeed, in some circumstances, but in the main substance they agree in one. Do we not see some men contending with the papist, with wonderful eagerness? Do we not see others tugging and haling, one one way, the other another; one for this ceremony and another for that, as though there were a mortal difference between them; yea, the difference so great, that it is sometimes the greatest reason for one side to refuse this or that because the other useth it? Now, he that shall search into the innermost secrets of these antagonists, shall find them that so eagerly differ about circumstance (who could have believed it?) to agree in substance. Like ships that sail in the sea, a great way asunder, yet all tending to one haven: all tending to this end, to win or obtain the favour of an angry God. This that hath been spoken may prove a help to administer a spirit of discerning unto the simple, in these distracted times, wherein the commonwealth is not more distracted than the church. Now, among so many diversities of opinions, how shall we know which is the old and the good way, that we may walk in it? One saith, I am Christ; another, Nay, but I am Christ. For thy direction, search for that religion that abaseth man, that giveth the glory of grace to God; that propoundeth

the free love of God in Jesus Christ, without mixture of anything in the creature; that is the true religion, all the rest are false: that is the true way, and straight line, all the rest are counterfeit and crooked. This is the first application.

The second application is to correct our idolatrous thoughts and judgments, that we have had of God. What foolish fancies have possessed our souls? How often have we thought God to be like unto ourselves? How many times have we imagined an angry God, a wrathful majesty, and sought to appease his indignation by fasting, by praying, by alms, by tears, and such like things? O foolish man! if his wrath should not be before appeased, what creature could stand in his sight? Do we not see that when some lion-like man is incensed, the whole house trembles; not one servant, no, not a son, dares come into his presence before his wrath be over? If we so fear the unjust wrath of man, how terrible would the just wrath of consuming fire be? What great presumption were it for the creature to come into his presence, if his wrath were not appeased? We complain of idolatry crept into our unhappy nation; we complain of bowing, of cringing, of crossing, and many such fopperies. Search we, I beseech you, if idolatry have not hitherto crept into your hearts; if you have not set up a great idol, and bowed unto that image, with all it worshippeth. Learn to make clean the inside as well as the outside of the cup: learn to banish out of the soul those foolish and vain conceits: learn to see the glory of the face of God in Jesus, and to worship him in spirit and in truth. There cannot be greater idolatry committed, than to conceive a possibility of gaining the love and favour of God by works wrought in the creature. This is as great an idol as that which was set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon, sixty cubits high. Dan. iii. This is the beast that hath made the whole earth to partake of her fornications.

The third application is to stir us up to admire the exceed-

ing love of God, and his wonderful goodness. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, whether ever the like grace were heard of since the mountains were framed. Who could have expected that the Lord should have been half so gracious? Did we ever imagine to hear such a voice from heaven to earth, so full of grace, so full of glory? Had the Lord propounded his love and reconciliation to us, upon hard and difficult conditions, yet if possible, should not we have accounted it a happiness; for what would not the distressed soul have done (witness the acts of our forefathers) for to have purchased remission, and to have obtained the favour of God? But see if any grace be like to this grace. The Lord calleth from heaven unto the sons of men, by his Son, Jesus, saying: O ye sons of men, what could I have done, or what could you have wished me to do, more than I have done? Behold, I am friends with you, I love you truly: see, have I not given you my Son? And now I beseech you, by my Son, that you would be reconciled unto me: I am friends with you, be you friends with me. Did we ever think to hear the God of heaven to beseech and entreat us to be reconciled unto God? That man should entreat God to be reconciled was what we might imagine; but that we should find God already reconciled, and praying of man that he would be reconciled, this is grace beyond expression. And as this sets forth the glorious grace of God, so doth it aggravate our unthankfulness unto God, if we shall refuse his gracious offer.

If some poor and base man, some notorious person, had offended the magistrates of this city, whereby he had deserved severe punishment, yet the magistrates should send for this offender, and declare themselves satisfied, and entreat him to shake hands with them; if, now, this offender should stubbornly refuse to be reconciled to them whom he had offended, what should we think of such a person? The case is ours; it is we that have offended God; God hath not offended us:

yet now, when the offended God shall declare his grace, and send the ministry of reconciliation to us who were offenders, if we shall now refuse and turn away our ears, and refuse to submit to his righteousness, what ingratitude will this be? That we may yet more admire the grace of our God, the Lord is pleased to use familiar expressions, to declare unto us that it pleased God to betroth unto himself a wife, whom he would admit into so much favour, as to call him Ishi, my husband, Hos. ii. 16, unto whom he would vouchsafe so much honour as to call her his spouse, his love, his dove, &c., and to betroth her unto himself for ever. Who is it, unto whom the Lord vouchsafeth such grace? What person is it, whom the Lord will take to be his spouse? Was there ever such a thing as this heard? That poverty should sue unto riches, that deformity should sue unto beauty, is no wonder; but that a mighty, rich, beautiful, and potent prince should sue unto a poor, old, decrepit, deformed, diseased, lousy beggar, what story can witness any such thing? And with reverence and trembling be it spoken, the mighty God of heaven betroths unto himself, and swears unto, vile, poor, deformed, sinful, diseased, loathsome man. When man intendeth to take a companion of his love, some aim at nobility, some at beauty, others at riches; these are the three loadstones that commonly attract the liking and love of man: but it is not so with God. Look we at the nobility of his spouse; at her parentage; from whence she is descended: thy father was an Amorite, thy mother a Hittite: she is base-born, a daughter of whoredoms. But it may be, beauty might recompence the baseness of her birth. Look we at her beauty; her native beauty is blood and pollution, a deformed creature; her artificial beauty, neither washing, nor swaddling, nor salting. But, peradventure, what was lacking in birth and beauty, might be supplied in riches and plenty (for riches make many marriages). Let us survey her riches. Behold,

instead of an habitation, thou wast cast out into the open field; instead of raiment, not wherewithal to buy her wedding garments and ornaments, nakedness, even stark nakedness. *I spread the skirt of my clothing over thee, and covered thy nakedness.* Here is a spouse that hath not wherewithal to buy her a wedding garment. Oh, the depth of the riches of the mercy of God! Neither noble, nor beautiful, nor rich; and yet the Lord hath set his love upon us. Nay, here is one thing exceedeth all this that hath been spoken: so miserable was our condition, that it hath cost the Lord a great dowry. And the Lord must buy us unto himself—not with silver or gold, nor with two hundred foreskins of the Philistines, but with the precious blood of the Son of God. I desire to leave you in admiration of this transcendent love, and to pass unto the fourth application to comfort the distressed soul.

Here are the queries of thy burdened soul answered. What goodness must I find in me? What conditions? What qualifications, before that I believe God to be a father to me in Christ? What must I do to be saved? Thou seest here the freeness of God's grace, the glory of his reconciliation. And I will be bold to say unto thee, as Moses speaketh unto Israel in another case, *Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he hath shewed you this day.* Exod. xiv. 13. Or as Jehaziel speaketh unto Judah in another case, *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah, and Jerusalem.* 2 Chron. xx. 17. What shall I do to obtain the favour of God? I say, believe him favourable unto thee, freely for his own sake. But here the poor soul will object and say, Alas! should I believe, that have not one jot of goodness in me; nay more, that have all manner of evil in me. I answer, thou hast as much in thee as God requires at thy hands, to precede his love, to go before his reconciliation. If he had said he could not love thee before

such and such conditions, then thou mightest have had cause to distrust his love. But thou hast seen his love to man, even dead in trespasses and sin. He came to call sinners, not the righteous to repentance. Come to him empty of all goodness, and partake of his fulness: come to him hungry and he shall fill thee, thirsty, and he shall satisfy thee. Oh, what injury do we unto the grace of God, in that we imagine God to be like unto some niggardly man, who will not bid us welcome to his house, unless we bring our cost with us! The Lord looks for nothing at our hands, to obtain his favour: come unto him naked, and he shall clothe thee. But the poor soul will yet object further, and say: My case is yet worse than you perceive; for I am not only void of goodness, I am not only full of filthiness and abomination, but which is worst of all, I cannot leave my sins, I cannot forsake my whoredoms and drunkenness. How oft have I vowed!—how oft have I promised!—yea, how oft have I sworn, to forsake my sins, and yet all in vain! I have returned with the dog to the vomit, and with the washed sow to wallow in the mire. What say you to my case? If I should now come unto Christ, would he bid me welcome? If I should believe God loving unto me, would it not be the greatest sin unto me? Must not I forsake and leave my sins before I believe? Must not I cast out the rubbish out of my soul, before Christ will love me? Must I not first be washed and cleansed, before Christ will show any favour unto me? Although the answer to this objection do properly belong unto the second thing to be showed: (namely) man's reconciliation to God, yet I will speak something. And I desire thee to try one conclusion, to come unto Christ first, and leave thy sins afterward; get power from him to forsake thine iniquities. This is the reason why thy labour hath been in vain, because thou has gone the wrong way to work, that is, to mortify thy sin first, and to come to Christ

afterwards. Now how is it possible thou shouldst mortify thy sin before thou believest in his name, when whatsoever is not of faith is sin? Dost thou think to cast out rubbish without him? Dost thou think to bind the strong man by thine own power? Thou art deceived. Wouldst thou mortify thy sin? See the order of the Holy Ghost, Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication*, &c. Therefore, *wherefore*, (see verse 1) *if ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.* First rise with Christ, then mortify. See the example of Mary, who had seven devils in her; she doth not say, If I could cast out my devils then I would come to Christ, but she cometh and bringeth her seven devils with her, and the Lord casteth them out every one for her. Do thou likewise; bring thy sins with thee, and let him cast them out for thee. If thou say, If I were washed, then I could believe, then I could come boldly to him:—I ask thee, who should wash thee? I say, Come unto him, soul, and he shall make thee clean. Doth not he call *all that labour and are heavy laden?* Matt. xi. 28. The burden and load is sin. He doth not say, Lay down your burthen first, and then come unto me; but, Come unto me laden, and I will give you rest.

But you will say, Is it not written, that *Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate persons, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God?* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Again, Is it not written, *Without holiness no man shall see God?* Heb. xii. 14. To see God, and to inherit the kingdom of God, are nothing else but to believe in God, and his Son Jesus Christ. But this you see cannot be without holiness, therefore I must have holiness first, before I can believe. I answer, The text saith not so, but *without holiness no man shall see God.* If I should say, without eating and drinking no man can live; wouldst thou presently conclude that I must eat and drink before I be alive, when sense will tell

thee I must be alive before I can eat and drink? Yet this is thy arguing: *Without holiness no man shall see God,* therefore we must have holiness before we can see God; when it is evident we must see God before we can have holiness; for, *whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* Rom. xiv. 23. But the meaning of the place is, that Christ will not only purge the conscience, but the conversation also of all such as come to him, that is, believe in his name, and that a reformed conversation shall (though not go before) yet accompany a clear apprehension of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

And thus we give an answer unto that other portion of holy scripture, *fornicators shall not inherit the kingdom of God;* not that it is to be thought that men must first mortify their sins before they can come to the kingdom of God, but that, entering into the kingdom of God, the Lord would vouchsafe unto them power to reform their lives. And that this is the true sense of the place is plain, by the eleventh verse, *Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* They were such until they were washed, and how were they washed? even in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. When the buyers and sellers had profaned the temple, the Lord doth not stay while somebody had cast them out, and then go into the temple afterwards, but he enters into the temple first, and making a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple. John ii. 15.

So fareth it with the temple of thy body, that is profaned with sin, and thy conscience that is defiled with iniquity. Thou must not think that thy conscience must be washed first, and then the Lord to enter afterwards; but the Lord must first enter, and wash thee and purge thee by his blood, which *purgeth the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.* Heb. ix. 14. Therefore when thou complainest thou

canst not leave thy sins; I say, thou hadst the more need to believe in Christ, that thou mightest have power to forsake them. But, poor soul, thou dost object further, and say: I have been an extortioner, a grinder of the faces of the poor, a thief, a purloiner, and what, shall I venture to believe in Christ before I have made restitution and satisfaction to them whom I have wronged? Are we not taught out of the fathers, *non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur oblatum:* without restitution no remission?

I answer, first, there are many things that are well spoken by the fathers, in one sense, which are perversely applied in another. This sentence is true in respect of reconciliation of man to man, but not true in respect of God to man, or man to God. As when a man shall, by a lawful church, be for extortion excommunicated, the church ought not to receive him again until restitution be made. And thus may we in good sense understand other passages of the fathers, which are otherwise perversely applied by themselves and others. Wilt thou deserve pardon, saith Ambrose, wash away thy sins by tears. This is good, in my first sense of reconciliation of man to man, as when the church shall excommunicate an offender, and he shall humble himself with tears in his eyes, he ought again to be received. But to apply this as a means to reconcile God to man, there can be nothing more abominable.

Thus much by the way, to give thee warning of the gross applications which are made out of the fathers, by those which understand not what they say. But to answer thy doubt: thou fearest to believe because thou hast not made restitution. I say, believe first, make restitution afterwards; for this we have an example beyond all exception, Luke xix. 8. Zaccheus stood forth, and said unto the Lord, *Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore*

him fourfold. If we look back to the sixth verse, there we see that Zaccheus received Christ joyfully. Zaccheus was an arch-publican, verse 2, a man that was a sinner, verse 7, yet this sinner, this arch-publican, received Christ first (not into his house only, but into his heart also), and then he makes restitution afterward. Go and do likewise; thou seest the abundant grace of God above and beyond all obstacles: if thou canst believe, thou needest not fear, though thou hast been never so sinful. Thus much for the fourth application.

Application 5.—The fifth; If God be so freely reconciled to us, how ought we to be easy to be entreated to be reconciled one to another? The Lord is slow to wrath, and full of compassion, and loving kindness. Take we heed that we be not full of wrath, and slow to compassion. God is reconciled to us before we ask; how much more ought we to be reconciled to those that have offended us, and say, forgive us? Oh, that we had so much charity in us, as to bear one with another, the stronger with the weaker, that unhappy differences might have an end. Secondly, Is God thus freely reconciled to us? Oh, let us be entreated to be reconciled unto him. Which is the second general I have to show unto you; what it is for man to be reconciled to God.

RECONCILIATION OF MAN TO GOD.

Before I enter to speak of man's reconciliation to God, it is necessary that I premise a distinction, and show you a two-fold reconciliation, set out unto us in the scriptures; 1st, original. 2nd. Actual. Bear with the terms, I confess they are not altogether so fit as I could wish. But I therefore thought fit to use these terms, that I might parallel this distinction unto another, used by divines of original and actual sin. Original reconciliation is wrought without us by another person, yet for us; you may call it the reconciliation of our nature. Actual reconciliation is wrought within us, although not by our own power. This you may call the reconciliation of our persons or consciences, the one being the reconciliation of our nature to God, the other the manifestation of that, and the promised reconciliation to our souls. That this is not an unnecessary distinction you shall find by comparing some scriptures together; the first is Rom. v. 10, *When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* Again, Eph. ii. 16, *That he might reconcile both unto God into one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby,* Col. i. 20, 21. Thirdly, consider what is written, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their tresspasses unto them.* Now compare we these three places fore-mentioned, with that which we find, 2 Cor. v. 20, *We are*

ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God. In the former places the apostle told us we were reconciled; and in this place, he beseecheth us to be reconciled. For to take up this difference, I say that in the former he speaketh of our original reconciliation, wherein our nature was reconciled to God by Christ; in the second. I say he speaketh of our actual reconciliation, wherein our consciences become reconciled to God, through the apprehension of the reconciliation which Christ hath wrought for us. First of all, I must speak of our original reconciliation. And there I lay down this proposition, that we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, without any previous conditions in us, or performed by us. You see it is the act of Christ upon the cross, it was done by his death. The Lord Christ being a common person, taking our nature upon him, we are said to do that which he did, and to have that done upon us which was done upon him. As in the first Adam we all sinned before we were, or had committed any actual transgression; so in the second Adam we were reconciled. *As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* Rom. v. 19. I say we are said to do that which he did, as to be *buried with Christ, by baptism unto death.* Rom. vi. 4. We are said to be *crucified with Christ, as our old man is crucified with him.* Rom. vi. 6. To be dead and alive with him, *Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. vi. 11. We are said to be *risen with him,* Col. iii. 1, which is elegantly set forth by the prophet Hosea. Speaking of the resurrection of Christ, he speaketh on this wise, *After two days he will revive us, and the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.* Hos. vi. 2. Yet more, we are said to be placed together in *heavenly places with him.* Eph. ii. 5, 6. This is

that which I call original reconciliation. Whereby we see that not only God was reconciled unto us, but also that our nature was reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, without any condition or qualification wrought in us. Thus much for our original reconciliation.

Now follows our actual reconciliation, to wit, the manifestation of God's reconciliation to us, and of the reconciliation of our nature to God in Jesus Christ. Here I lay down this proposition. Man's actual reconciliation to God, requireth previous conditions and qualifications to be wrought in man by the Spirit of God, before man can be actually reconciled to God, or God's reconciliation manifested unto him. Although this proposition needs no proof, in regard that the world so far doteth on conditions, that they will hardly admit God to be reconciled to man, without performances in man—surely much less will they think it possible that man should be reconciled unto God, without something wrought in man—yet for our better understanding I will show you the proof of this by certain texts. As, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* John iii. 5. *Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,* verse 3. To enter into and to see the kingdom of God, is that which I call reconciliation to God. To know the favour and love of God towards us in Christ, requires you to see the condition of being born again of water and of the Spirit, which is (not to be baptized, as the papists would have it, but) to have such fruits and effects of God's Spirit wrought in us as purify the heart, as water doth the body. Secondly, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* John vi. 53. Mark, I pray you, he doth not say, that except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in God, or in Christ; but *ye have no life in you.* Now you see we must eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, or else we can have no life in us. To eat his flesh and to drink

his blood is to believe in him; to have life in you, is to know God's favour in Jesus Christ, as much as if he should say, Except ye believe, ye cannot know God's favour to you in Jesus Christ. Unto this we may add in the third place: *Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.* Luke xiii. 3. And to this place we may also refer that place of which we had occasion to speak somewhat before, *without holiness no man shall see God,* Heb. xii. 14; not only that holiness is concomitant or companion of our seeing of God, but that faith being a part of (yea the first fruits of holiness), is that whereby the soul is brought to the sight of God in Jesus Christ. But I am not willing to spend time in larger proof, though you cannot but perceive I might be very large herein; but I will, for your better understanding, confine myself, and go on to show you in particular, what conditions are required in us before we can be reconciled to God. And here I have occasion, for the better explaining of this, to commend unto you three sorts of conditions:

1. *Antecedent.*
2. *Present.*
3. *Consequent.*

Antecedent conditions I call those which are necessarily pre-supposed in us before we can submit unto God, or be reconciled unto him. They are such conditions as may be separated from reconciliation in time, yea they are such conditions, as are and may be in them which are not reconciled, nor yet ever shall be, so that they are proper, *omnibus sed non solis electis,* to all the elect, but not only to the elect. 2. *Present conditions* I call them that go before reconciliation, as the cause before the effect, yet are never separated from reconciliation in time, but are indeed the very thing whereby the Holy Spirit of God doth reconcile man to God. 3. *Consequent conditions* I call them which do always follow reconciliation, as the effect the cause, although they are inseparable in respect of time. And I therefore undertake

to speak of these (although the curious may think me blameworthy for transgressing the rules of method) that we might be warned of a rock and shelf; namely, that we do not confound these conditions together, and to take those for antecedent which are only consequent; which to my knowledge hath made some souls to make shipwreck for a time, when as they would have in them before they believe such conditions as are only consequents, and not antecedents of faith. First, to speak of antecedent conditions, which necessarily go before our reconciliation to God. They shall be referred unto two heads. The first is the knowledge of sin, with whatsoever is requisite unto the knowledge of sin. The second is the knowledge of the depth of misery by sin to be such, as we can neither help ourselves, neither is it in the power of any other creature for to help us; but that we are undone for ever in respect of whatsoever we can do or any other for us. For until the soul be brought to this, there is no hope of reconciling it unto God; for you must know, that it is mere necessity that drives us. We are by nature haters of God, and cannot be brought to come to God in love before we perceive God to love us; such is the malignant nature of man, that if he could make any shift in the world, he would not be beholding to God for help. The prodigal son will never return to his father, so long as he can get clothes for his back and meat for his belly elsewhere; but when he is brought to that pass that he would fain have *filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him,* Luke xv. 16, then he is contented to think of submitting to his father, but not before; if he could have got a living by keeping of hogs, he would not have returned. Thus it is with man, so long as he is in any hope to escape misery any other way, there is no hope of his returning to God. *They that be whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.* Matt. ix. 12.

The pharisee thinketh himself able to establish his own righteousness; and therefore he will not *submit to the righteousness of God.* Rom. x. 4. He cares not a pin for Christ; he is whole, he cares not for the physician. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.* Luke ix. 23. No man can follow Christ except he deny himself, his own righteousness and holiness. Would you know a reason, under the determinate counsel of God, why the publicans and harlots received Christ, but the holy pharisees rejected him (a true pattern of our days)? The pharisees thought themselves able to stand upon their own legs; they were alive in their conceits, and for them to hear of righteousness in another was too great a disparagement unto them and their holiness; when the publicans and strumpets, being convinced of sin, and having no righteousness of their own, they are contented to accept it upon any terms. A rich man, he sometimes scorneth a gift, and saith, Nay, but I will buy it, I will give satisfaction for it; but the poor naked man is glad to receive what he wanteth. Thus before the soul of man be brought to be reconciled unto God, it is necessary that it see itself a sinful creature; yea so sinful, that neither crying nor howling can wash it away; yea so sinful, that no correction or amendment of life is able to make satisfaction.

Thus far of the antecedent conditions, which, as I said before, are proper to all. But not only to them that are reconciled to God; for these that I have showed hitherto, may be found in the not reconciled, even as in the reconciled; yea, in the reprobate, even as in the elect. The second sort of conditions are present, which go before reconciliation, as the cause before the effect, but is never separated from it; as being the thing, I say, whereby the holy Spirit of God doth actually reconcile the soul to God. Of this sort I find but one only conditon; namely, of faith or believing. Here are

two things to be pondered. The first, that without believing, the soul (remaining in the body) cannot be reconciled unto God. The second, that by believing, the soul is actually reconciled unto God. For the first, it is proved: *He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* John iii. 36. To be reconciled to God is to see life, therefore he that believeth not shall not be reconciled to God, but the apprehension of the wrath of God shall torment his wakened conscience. He that believeth not shall not see life; he shall see nothing but wrath. Secondly, *He that believeth not God hath made him a liar,* 1 John v. 10; that is, hath accounted him a liar. Now, who can find in his heart to be reconciled to a liar? Whereby it is plain, that without, or before faith, man cannot be reconciled unto God. For the second, that by believing, the soul becomes to be reconciled unto God, is proved: *He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.* John iii. 33. *As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* John i. 12. Whosoever believeth, hath power to cry, Abba, Father. And to this place we refer that known text, Rom. v. 1, *Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* And this is the proper office of faith (as it justifieth), to reconcile the soul and conscience unto God, and to make us at peace with him, by assuring us of his favour and good will towards us in Jesus Christ, manifested in that God gave his only Son to be a propitiation for our sins, and to satisfy whatsoever the justice of God required at his hands. And this is our receiving of Christ, our putting on of Christ, and our living by faith (if we take faith for believing). And thus much of the second condition which is *present.* Now follows the third sort of conditions, which are consequent unto our reconciliation, and things that accompany our

salvation. These conditions are, first, *Joy in the Holy Ghost.* Secondly, *Love to God and his church.* Thirdly, *New obedience in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.*

First, *Joy in the Holy Ghost* is a necessary consequent and an inseparable companion to our reconciliation by faith; as appears by that which hath been spoken before, touching joying in believing, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And indeed, how can it be that it should be otherwise; can the men of this world hear of great possessions fallen unto them without joyfulness? How then is it possible, that the children of the living God can come to the apprehension of the fatherly love of God in Christ, but they must needs sing a new song, yea, break forth into singing, and cry aloud, with the blessed virgin, saying, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* Luke i. 46.? If I could this day bring you happy tidings of reconciliation between king and parliament (which the God of heaven effect), what joy would this work in the hearts of every man here present? How much more shall the tidings of eternal peace by Jesus Christ affect the soul with extraordinary comfort. Hear what the Lord speaks concerning the new Jerusalem; *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,* &c. Rev. xxi. 4. Let others think what they will; I firmly believe the new Jerusalem to be the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ (which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost), advanced in the conscience. And hither also are to be referred those glorious things that are spoken of the city of our God, by the gospel prophet, in these words, *The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* Isa. xxxv. 10. This is the promise of our Saviour, *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* John

xvi. 20. This is the office of the Holy Ghost, to be the comforter, to speak peace and joy unto his people. And therefore amongst the sundry precious gifts, which are declared to be the fruits of God's Spirit, *joy* is not the least, Gal. v. 22. This is also the lot and inheritance of the saints of God; for we read not of any converts in the scripture, but we also read of the joy of God's Spirit replenishing their souls. They (even they) who were pricked in their hearts, and knew not what to do, do now *eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.* Acts ii. 46. The eunuch returneth *rejoicing,* Acts viii. 39. Samaria's conversion causeth great joy in that city, Acts viii. 8.

But why do I stay on particulars? Let us hear the apostle for all; *We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,* Rom. v. 11. *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: and more, we glory in tribulation also,* verses 2, 3. Can the sun be without his light? Can the fire be without heat? Then also may the called of God, the reconciled to the Father, be without joy and peace in believing. Can a man stop the ebbing or flowing of the water? Then may the souls of the reconciled to God be deprived of those floods of comforts which flow from fountains of comforts into the subject of comforts, the souls of the people reconciled to God. This is the first effect of reconciliation, joy, and peace. The second follows, which is, love to God. Love is also an inseparable consequent of man's reconciliation: can man behold the beauty of God and the glory of his face in Jesus Christ, and the soul not be ravished with love? See the love of the reconciled to God in that garden of sweet expressions, the book of Canticles; *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick with love.* Cant. ii. 5. The love of the reconciled to God, it is a great love: *Many sins are forgiven her, for she loved much.* Luke vii. A love taking great delight and content-

ment in the object beloved; *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand; his head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven, his mouth is most sweet, he is altogether lovely.* Cant. v. 10, &c. Again, it is a restless love that can find no content, can take no rest (no, not in her bed), if she may not enjoy the presence of her beloved. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loved; I sought him but I found him not, I will rise now and go about the city,* &c. Cant. iii. 1, 2. That this love is an inseparable consequent, a daily companion of man's reconciliation to God, will be plain, when we shall see how the Holy Ghost, describing unto us the called of God, setteth them forth by this token of love unto Almighty God: *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, &c. the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* 1 Cor. ii. 9. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.* Rom. viii. 28. This ornament of love is like the garment of divers colours, with which all the king's daughters, which were virgins, were apparelled, 2 Sam. xiii. 18. If a woman be seen in the streets without a party-coloured garment, it is concluded that she is either none of the king's daughters, or at least no virgin: so is this ornament of love (I say), that thing wherewith all the people of God, reconciled to him, are adorned. If we see a soul altogether stripped of this ornament, we conclude they are not in the number of God's people, or at least not reconciled: therefore the Holy Ghost concludes: *He that loveth not knoweth not God.* 1 John iv. 8. And, as on the affirmative, pronounceth, *Grace be on all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.* Eph. vi. 24. So also on the negative *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.* 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Thus you see the consequents of our reconciliation, inseparably conjoined together, so that no creature shall he able to put them asunder: you have seen *peace to the brethren, and*

love, with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephes. vi. 23.

The third consequent is new obedience in newness of the spirit. As peace, and joy, and love follow, and attend upon faith, so is new obedience an attendant of love. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.* 1 John v. 3. *If you love me, keep my commandments.* John xiv. 15. *If a man love me, he will keep my words,* verse 23. This is that which I had occasion to speak of before, that the Holy Spirit of God doth not only cleanse the conscience, but in some measure the conversation also. This is that which I said before, *Without holiness no man shall see God,* and *drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* I say again, that Christ entering into the soul, shall drive out whatsoever is profane, and draw up the soul by the cords of love unto new obedience. And to this place we refer hatred of sin, love of virtue, a godly sorrow for transgression committed, revenge upon ourselves for the things that are passed, and a jealous care for that which is to come. But of these particularly I cannot speak; for as Rome was not built on a day, so neither can it be pulled down in an hour (I mean the doctrine of Rome). And here I would have made an end of speaking of the consequents of our reconciliation, but that I fear the timorous soul will be ready to say, In thus saying you have filled my heart with sorrow. The consequents of our reconciliation being laid down, I confess they are true; but alas, when I cast an eye back upon mine own soul, I find my joy and comfort little, my love to be less than my joy, and my obedience to be least of all. This, this puts my heart in fear, and makes my soul to tremble. I answer, What is it that thou fearest, O thou of little faith? Thou answerest, Thou art afraid that God is not thy God, that he is not reconciled unto thee. See thy error; these things cannot be signs that God is not reconciled unto

thee, but they are signs that thou art not fully reconciled unto God, but that thy faith is weak like the bulrush, that thy joy is as little as thy faith, and that thy love and obedience is as imperfect as thy joy. Measure not the reconciliation of God to thy soul by the perfection of thy obedience; for in so doing thou plungest thy soul into miserable doubts. But seeing the imperfection, not of God's reconciliation to thee, but of thy reconciliation to God, cry thou unto the throne of grace, Lord, increase my faith, and make my love and obedience, my joy and peace, to abound more and more, through the Spirit of our God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And thus have I now done with the antecedent, the present, and consequent conditions of our reconciliation to God. The next thing that I intend is to make application.

It hath been hitherto mine endeavour to declare unto you the mystery of salvation, and to imitate the skilful limner, to give unto every limb and part not only his due proportion, but also his due place, and not to set the head where the foot should be, or the foot where the head. I may, peradventure, to many seem guilty of that crime which was laid against the apostle, to turn the world upside down, and to place that in the bottom which others make the top of the building, and to set that upon the roof which others lay for a foundation. But I submit myself to the judgment of the word. Consider we what hath been spoken of God's reconciliation to us without all conditions; of our reconciliation to God, original and actual; and now let us see if these distinctions be founded (as it is before proved) upon the holy scriptures of the prophets and apostles; whether they be not blameworthy that make no difference at all between these two, but confounding heaven and earth together, the creature with the Creator, do most absurdly apply those things which are antecedents or causes of our reconciliation unto God, to

be causes of God's reconciliation unto us, drawing a veil before the free grace of God, and keeping the soul from settling upon a sure foundation. The Lord complained of the prophets of old (the false prophets) that they puddled the waters with their feet. When water is puddled, it is not water, but water and dirt mingled together; in a puddle no man can discern whether it be deep or shallow; water is doctrine, puddling is confounding of things together without division or separation. Oh that our days were free from this complaint! O ye pastors of the Lord's flock, that feed his heritage: be you contented to bear the word of admonition from the meanest of the servants of God. Look back upon the waters that ye have made the heritage of the Lord to drink; consider the pastures which you have set before them; have you not made the Lord's sheep become a prey (sometimes to presumption, sometimes to despair) by your doctrine? Have you not made the souls of the righteous sad, and the souls of the wicked to rejoice? Consider your ways, I pray you; have you not many a time confounded the conditions of our reconciliation to God, making that to be the cause which is the effect, and that to be the effect which is the cause? Let me beseech you to weigh these things, and to endeavour that your doctrine may be the light of the world, that it may be *clear as the crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.* Rev. xxii. 1. You, sheep of the pasture of the Lord, the God of his inheritance, know it your duty aptly to distinguish these things in your own consciences, that you may enjoy the brightness of the glory of the grace of God, set up in your souls. If you search into the reason of your many years' bondage, of your miserable doubting, you shall find your disease in that which hath been spoken, and I hope the remedy also; the Lord give you understanding.

The second application may show unto us the difference

between the reconciled and the not reconciled. Although both may be objects of the grace of God, both beloved of the everlasting Father; yet shall you find a vast difference, if you look either upon their conversations or their consciences. The difference of conscience is, the not reconciled have a defiled and polluted conscience; a conscience that is either seared and filled with atheistical carelessness, or at the best, sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, seeing no light, Matt. iv. 16; when as the consciences of the reconciled do enjoy the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Secondly, the conversation of the people not reconciled is, either a conversation polluted with pharisaical righteousness and blind zeal (for all zealous persons are not reconciled to God), seeking to establish its own righteousness in the sight of God, or else a conversation according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; a conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Eph. ii. 2, 3.

The third application showeth us an open door for the easy understanding and plain reconciliation of many places of scripture, which seem so exceeding different, as if no way of reconciling could be found. Let us learn to distinguish when God speaketh of his reconciliation to us, and when he speaketh of our reconciliation to him. Let us learn to distinguish between the thing and the manifestation of the thing; the want of which distinction breedeth an horrible confusion in the interpretation of holy scripture. To give an instance, it is written, Gal. iii. 26, *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.* It is written again, Gal. iv. 6, *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.* In this last place the Holy Ghost declares sonship to be the cause of giving the Spirit, as also he declareth it to be

an eternal grace of God, communicated unto his people: *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ.* Eph. i. 5. But then, if this be so, how are we said to be sons of God by faith, &c.? I answer, the one speaketh of the thing itself, or of God's reconciliation to us; the other of the manifestation of the thing, or our reconciliation to God. Again, if the grace of adoption be an eternal grace, how is it said, we are *born again by the word?* 1 Pet. i. 23, and *begotten by the word?* James i. 18. I answer, these places are to be understood of the manifestation of adoption, not of the act of adoption itself: and that this is so, is plain, *God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* 1 Pet. i. 3. A lively hope is the thing unto which we are begotten. And that it is ordinary in scripture to call the manifestation of things by the names of the things themselves, will be plain by two places (I might bring two hundred); the first is Jer. i. 10, *I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant.* How doth poor Jeremy destroy nations? Even by declaring the judgments of God in the overthrow of nations. And thus doth he plant, by declaring the merciful promises of God in the restoration of nations.

The second place is, John xx. 23, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained.* How do the apostles remit and retain sins, but by declaring God's gracious remission to every one that believeth, &c.?

But some may object and say, Why doth not the Lord speak in plain terms? I answer, Who art thou that wilt correct the Lord, and teach him to speak? I answer again, in our Saviour's words. When his disciples ask the question, *Why speakest thou unto them in parables?* Matt. xiii. 10; his answer is, *Because it is given to you to know the mysteries*

of the kingdom of God, but to them it is not given. As if he should have said, in respect of you, that are my people, I need not to speak more plain; for you (being taught of God) are able to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. In respect of others, I will not speak more plain, because to them it is not given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. Thus far for the application: I now draw to an end. Only I will give you the skeleton or map of that which hath been delivered, in a few words. Consider we the causes of God's reconciliation, as it stands manifested to us in Christ. Secondly, the causes of our reconciliation to God.

God's Reconciliation to us.	Our Reconciliation to God.
1. *Efficient.*—God's love.	*Efficient.*—Principal, Holy Ghost; instrumental, faith,
2. *Material.*—Christ's righteousness.	*Material.*—Christ's righteousness.
3. *Formal.*—Imputation of righteousness.	*Formal.*—Apprehension of Christ's righteousness by faith.
4. *Final.*—God's glory, man's salvation.	*Final.*—God's glory, and man's consolation.

Consider we the difference of these two in their causes. The final cause of God's reconciliation to us is salvation; the final cause of our reconciliation to God is consolation. The Lord fill you with his Spirit, that the apprehension of God's salvation may fill you with eternal consolation. Amen.

FINIS.

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